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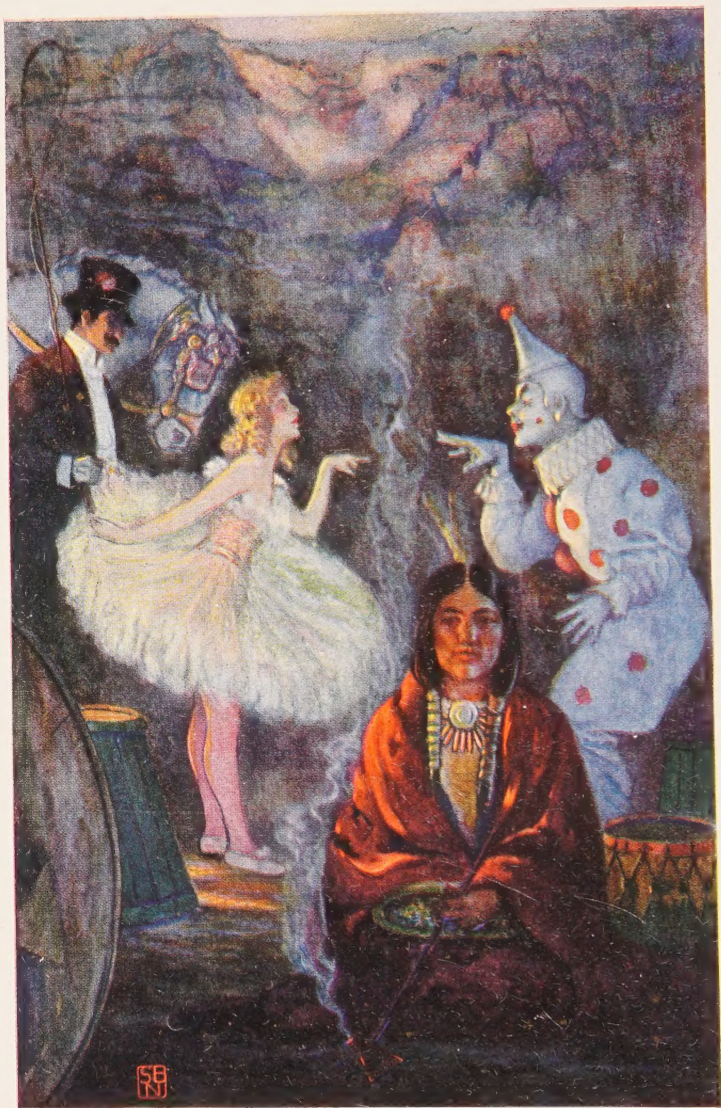
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G R E N S T O N E P O E M S 1917

B Y N N E R W I T T E R



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"It was true that he had lived in the silent places, beside the Grand Canyon"—Page 9.

GRENSTONE POEMS

A SEQUENCE

BY

WITTER BYNNER

AUTHOR OF "THE NEW WORLD," ETC.

*WITH COVER AND FRONTISPIECE BY
SPENCER BAIRD NICHOLS*



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1917

TO
HANIEL LONG
HER FRIEND AND MINE
IN GRENSTONE

20960

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A GRACE BEFORE THE POEMS

"Is there such a place as Grenstone?"

Celia, hear them ask!

Tell me, shall we share it with them?—

Shall we let them breathe and bask

On the windy, sunny pasture,

Where the hill-top turns its face

Toward the valley of the mountain,

Our beloved place?

Shall we show them through our churchyard,

With its crumbling wall

Set between the dead and living?

Shall our willowed waterfall,

Huckleberries, pines and bluebirds

Be a secret we shall share? . . .

If they make but little of it,

Celia, shall we care?

I. GRENSTONE

I. ON THE WAY TO GRENSTONE

*How could I guess what difference was in store—
I who had never really loved before?*

BIRTHRIGHT

I TOO was born in Arcady;
My mother, who should know,
Whispered it through death to me.
But it was long ago;
And there are fathers in my blood
Who never would have understood
A son of Arcady,
Nor think it augurs any good
And cannot let it be.

So what these sponsors do, forsooth,
That I may understand,
Is in my blood to tell me truth
That never any land
Was such a place as Arcady . . .
And yet my mother says to me,
Who left me long ago,
"You too were born in Arcady—
Should not your mother know?"

FOREIGN HILLS

YOU would not think that, lost so young
Here in this outer land,
I still should feel my spirit wrung
And still not understand . . .

Though Grenstone is the name they said,
And though I pack my load
And though my cap is on my head—
What do I care which road?

What does it matter where I go,
When all I do is roam
Far from a place I used to know,
From hills and streams of home?

And foreign waters only smart
The lips that they caress
And foreign hills but bruise the heart
With vanished happiness.

HILLS OF HOME

NAME me no names for my disease,
With uninforming breath;
I tell you I am none of these,
But homesick unto death—

Homesick for hills that I had known,
For brooks that I had crossed,
Before I met this flesh and bone
And followed and was lost . . .

And though they break my heart at last,
Yet name no name of ills.
Say only, "Here is where he passed,
Seeking again those hills."

THE ROAD

IT was gay, starting—
When love was goal and goad,
With a feathered hope for darting
And an open foe for fighting . . .
I knew no parting,
While love was still a torch on the road
Of reuniting.

But when love's fire
Had nothing more to show
But a windy spark,
Then came the dire
Adventure—and the foe
I could not touch nor ever tire
Laughed in the driving dark.

THE TELEGRAPH-POLES

CHAINED a miraculous way,
Rounding the world in their flight—
Prophets of death in the day,
Warning of life in the night—

Naked, fettered trees,
Miles over field, over fen,
Swift beside rails to the seas,
They motionless move among men.

Sometimes the file on its march
Waits with a beggared look
For the touch of a leafy arch,
For the breath of the turn of a brook.

The rain with a freshening sound
Falls on the marshes—but now
Moistens no root underground,
Misses the glistening bough.

Grenstone

And birds, to renew their wings,
Come as of old—but the wires
Have none of the joy of the strings
Trembling in leafy-hung lyres.

Stripped of their verdure by men,
As men have been stripped of their souls,
Prophets are wandering again—
See them?—the telegraph-poles!

ON THE TRAIN

WHY write about it? How do I know?
But what I see I now set down,
For in my pulse the touch and flow
Of spring has entered from the urgent show
Of river, hill and town . . .

The bends of the Connecticut
Reflecting rows of pine and birch;
The banks of brush that climb and jut;
A castle full of corn; a workman's hut;
A pig, a barn, a church;

A boy blue-shirted at his ease
Fishing; a hawk, the peak of a cloud;
A man's head on a woman's knees;
Italians singing on the railroad;—these
Enter with spring and crowd

Grenstone

My heart and are my company
And lead me low and lead me high
As a swallow flying, trying to be
Water and earth and air. And what I see
I write, not knowing why . . .

Nor why I flow and pour and burn
Bright as the rim of yonder dam,
Nor why with the swallow I dart and turn,
Trying to be these things that I discern—
Until I am, I am!

EARLY APRIL IN GRENSTONE

THE freshets are free and the ice is afloat
And the stems of the willows are red in
the air,
The crows in long companies echo their note
And the little birds dare
With their breasts of dawn and their wings of
noon
To tell that the bluets are following soon.

Then a sudden cold night over hollows and hills
Lays a thickness of snow, for the inclines of day
And the meadows and bright multitudinous rills
To gather away . . .
As yesterday's beauty, returning, shall blend
With the morrow's new beauty—as I with a
friend!

II. NEIGHBORS AND THE COUNTRY- SIDE

*People and places are alive with light—
Before the sun itself moves into sight.*

LUKE

↓
BAREHEADED, with his bearded
throat

Open and brown, Luke was a friend
Who never greeted you by rote:

His good-day seemed itself to lend

A means of making the day good;

He had an ear for any true

Request or need; he understood

The many and the few.

I asked him in Grenstone, near a bed

Of those big strawberries he grew,

"Tell me your secret, Luke," I said,

"Why everybody's fond of you?"

"My learning quit with the little red school,

And secrets mostly bother me—

But there's darn good sense in the golden
rule . . .

I'm fond o' them," said he.

NEIGHBORS

LET me have faith, is what I pray,
And let my faith be strong!—
But who am I, is what I say,
To think my neighbor wrong?

And though my neighbor may deny
True faith could be so slight,
May call me wrong, yet who am I
To think my neighbor right?

We may discover by and by
Making our wisdom double,
That he is right and so am I—
And save a lot of trouble.

THE BEAU

HERE goes the dandy down the street,
As fine a fellow as you'll meet,
And cocks his hat.

But whither leads a dapper tread?—
My poor old father long since dead
Was good at that.

My mother heard my father's plea
And soon presented him with me;
So that he died:
And here am I, waistcoat and all,
The image of my father's fall,
As of his pride.

Grandames, who watched through darken-
ing blind
The neatest fellow they could find
With stick and spat,
Now, see a newer dandy stare
With the same unconquerable air
And cock his hat.

A FARMER REMEMBERS LINCOLN

“L INCOLN?—

Well, I was in the old Second Maine,
The first regiment in Washington from the Pine
Tree State.

Of course I didn't get the butt of the clip;
We was there for guardin' Washington—
We was all green.

“I ain't never ben to but one theater in my life—
I didn't know how to behave.

I ain't never ben since.

I can see as plain as my hat the box where he
sat in

When he was shot.

I can tell you, sir, there was a panic

When we found our President was in the shape
he was in!

Never saw a soldier in the world but what liked
him.

*Neighbors and
the Countryside*

"Yes, sir. His looks was kind o' hard to forget.
He was a spare man,
An old farmer.

Everything was all right, you know,
But he wan't a smooth-appearin' man at all—
Not in no ways;
Thin-faced, long-necked,
And a swellin' kind of a thick lip like.

"And he was a jolly old fellow—always cheerful;
He wan't so high but the boys could talk to him
their own ways.

While I was servin' at the Hospital
He'd come in and say, "You look nice in here,"
Praise us up, you know.

And he'd bend over and talk to the boys—
And he'd talk so good to 'em—so close—
That's why I call him a farmer.

I don't mean that everything about him wan't all
right, you understand,

It's just—well, I was a farmer—

And he was my neighbor, anybody's neighbor.

"I guess even you young folks would 'a' liked
him."

THE FIELDS

THOUGH wisdom underfoot
Dies in the bloody fields,
Slowly the endless root
Gathers again and yields.

In fields where hate has hurled
Its force, where folly rots,
Wisdom shall be uncurled
Small as forget-me-nots.

MERCY

“**H**E took your coat away?
Then go and fold
Your cloak around him too—
Lest he be cold.

“And if he took from you
Your daily bread,
Offer your heart to him—
That he be fed.

“And if you gave him all
Your life could give,
Give him your death as well—
That he may live.”

PAN

WHILE chopping trees down on a summer's
day,

A broad young farmer asked me what I read.

I showed the title to him, *Pan Is Dead*.

‘Gosh! What a name!’ he laughed—and
hacked away.

THE CIRCUS

I WENT to-night to a country circus.

There had been a parade at noon,
Strewn out along the village street under the elms
and maples:

A bugler, and gilt wagons, and a young Indian
with eyes calm as the desert; and men in
western costumes, with dark and weathered
faces;

And a lioness looking from a corner of a cage out
over the grass of a field toward tree-trunks;

And a clown riding trickily backward on a bicycle,
all the small bicycles in the village trailing
him;

And a band of musicians in buckskins and tan
shirts, with red handkerchiefs round their
necks, sedately but youthfully blowing dis-
cords—

All but the drummer with his drum, which can-
not be discordant;

Grenstone

And at the beginning of the procession, and remembered also at the end,
A gray-haired man with a responsible shrewd face.

And in the evening, outside the smaller tent in the flare of a jetting movable light,

The gray-haired man, between two Indians, did an old-fashioned trick, interlinking solid rings,

And talked shrewdly and responsibly for a long time.

And under his breath he remarked afterwards, not so much criticism as pride, that he had seen more drunkenness that morning in the village than among his whole troupe on their whole trip,

Having already said aloud like a preacher that his wife traveled with him, that there was no immorality in the troupe and that two carpenters had been discharged that morning for profanity.

And in the rush for tickets there was bumping and wedging;

*Neighbors and
the Countryside*

And there stood stalwart, guarding the ticket-booth and advising the line, a youth whose voice had the drawl of the south and whose eyes were gray and sentimental and whose mouth was sullen and tobacco-stained;

And the sentiment faded out of his eyes when he told three countrymen, who tried to force their way into the line by means of banter,

That he had money enough in his pocket to pay a fine;

And they went back and quietly took their places at the end, but not until he had sent their damn souls to hell.

And then in the smaller tent a silent young squaw, like an Egyptian child, held the head of a python while her husband, the Indian of the procession, standing behind her, moved and guided the silver coils and mottles of the python round her body and watched her with eyes that had seen the west.

And a pony counted numbers and told time with his paw.

Grenstone

And Punch had his unflagging game with Judy.
And a pale Swede, with a paunch, alarmed the
 lioness by rattling the door of her cage, then
 opened it and stood inside for a quick mo-
 ment—
And always the gray-haired man shrewdly and
 responsibly announcing.
And the Indian and his squaw sang in sweet,
 strange voices a modern tune to their own
 words, and his gestures were the world-old
 gestures of beauty;
And he played the harmonica deftly on one side
 and then on the other, alternating, no pause,
 and cupped it with a strong dark hand.
Then suddenly, outside toward the larger tent, the
 youngsters blared discords;
And presently he stopped.

They said that he was a chief and he may well
 have been,
For not even appearing six or seven times each
 afternoon and six or seven times each eve-
 ning and selling beads betweenwhiles to make
 New England holidays and his own spending-

*Neighbors and
the Countryside*

money, not even that had undone the dignity of his brow and straight nose, or the aloofness of his courtesy, or the silence behind his speech when I questioned him, like the stars over city roofs.

He was a Sioux, but had come from Arizona,
And when I questioned further, it was true that
he had lived in the silent places
Beside the Grand Canyon.

And he let me see for a moment that he knew by
what I said about the Canyon, and by what I
could not say, that I, too, felt his silence
and the river that pours through it unheard.

Then we all went into the larger tent, which was
open to the night.

And there was first the small pomp of the procession, more fitting for some reason under the night sky than under the elms at noon.

And there was swift riding and shrill calling.

And there was a woman on a glossy horse that
drew gently backward in a circle like
memory, or stepped forward in difficult slow
time like anticipation—

Grenstone

And the woman's face was like petrified wood
at dusk;

And there was a quadrille of horses carrying the
young men with dark faces, some of which,
when they came by the light, were lean and
wan.

And there was incessantly the accompaniment by
the young musicians; among whom was a
woman who played the cornet when neces-
sary and the rest of the time coughed.

And there was a young man with his shirt cut
diagonally across his back and chest and
deep under his arms, to show the muscles
moving like little waves when he lifted and
lowered himself and twined around the hang-
ing rings, or balanced horizontal and, by a
strap from his neck, held a workman off the
ground.

And there was a thin Mexican boy whose nerves
tingled with the nerves of the horses as he
ran alongside them and leapt into the saddle
and out again and leaned and curved with
the lean and curve of the horses and ejacu-
lated little phrases in a small harsh voice.

*Neighbors and
the Countryside*

And there was an experienced thick-set man whose eye could calculate distance and motion and whose hand could throw a noose round a swift-moving horseman's neck or waist, or round the horse's head or haunches or legs, or round the bodies of four horses urged in a group by four riders with spurs.

And there was a broncho that made a noise with the nostrils neither whinny nor neigh and a man in a yellow shirt who stayed astride him, while five men on foot shouted and yelled and the people on the lower benches drew back from the sharp bucking.

And the Mexican boy, seizing his turn with avidity, swung a circle of rope round his curls and stepped through it and back again and let it widen and widen until he swayed within it even smaller than he had been and thinner and swifter.

And there were clowns, and many little boys in the audience equally open-mouthed for laughing or for watching.

And there were peanuts, and tickets for the con-

Grenstone

cert, and cold lemonade, and the chill of night, and the smell of the lights, and dust from the rush of the horses.

And there were the shadowy crowds.

And there was again the young Indian, with beads over his arm, offering them not insistently nor anxiously, but with silence and certainty and an arm out now and then as if he were showing me the Grand Canyon of the Colorado . . .

Whose vast and rusted deeps were unmoving but for the slow, blue, diagonal line of twilight, as clear as the blue, diagonal shirt across the flesh of the fellow in the hanging rings . . .

And from the edge of the canyon a blue-jay darted and poised and chirped, as undaunted as the Mexican boy darting and uttering his small, hoarse phrases over the edge of death . . .

That rim

Where the sky at night is tipped upside down and silence is brought whole to your feet,

The silence containing China and Syria and Egypt

*Neighbors and
the Countryside*

and all their architecture and swift motions
and their pyramids and unremembered
speech—

And a river that pours unheard.

ASTRONOMY

WHETHER there are peopled stars
Other than our own and Mars,
We shall either know or not
When we're done with what we've got.

But there's something stranger far
Than wee folk on a great star,
When there dwell such mighty skies
In such little people's eyes.

VANTAGE

ALL is not well—so you go on
With what a wilful way,
And you are bound where others have gone,
You are as sure as they.

All must be well or you're off in a trice—
Therefore you never stay;
For you crave in summer streams of ice,
In winter growing hay.

You cannot bear it cut and dried
And pitched and put away,
And you cannot bear it green and wide
Over the mounds of May.

You cry for all good things, you dunce,
Together in one day,
You are as young as I was once—
With what a wilful way!

SUMMER IN GRENSTONE

SUMMER, I bring my knees again
To your shrine of lighted sky:
With silent wonder worshiping,
Deep in the grass I lie
In wonderful fright of a bumblebee,
Or a rapid speck of red,
Or an ant with little bandy legs
And a little tugging head;
In wondering league with his busy speed,
(What is it makes him spry?—
The many little sandy domes
Of the kingdom in his eye?)
In tune with the gleeful wit of a bird;
And, at far-off puffs of a train,
Content with the wonders made by men,
Though made they be with pain.
For by these wonders yours I see;
Summer, holy, sweet;—
And here in selfish faith again
I kneel before your feet.

GRENSTONE FALLS

THERE'S a hollow under the falls
Where happy fellows play—
You can hear their laughter and their calls
A mile away,
Greeting the spray . . .

You brace on the slant of the rock,
You slide along—till it comes
From face to feet with a shivering shock,
An avalanche of drums!

And when you shout and dive,
With water and air above,
O, it's like finding yourself alive
With the only one you love!

And then, where a nested haystack waits—
Two happy mates,
You and the sun,
When the courting's done,
Lie like one.

TO A PHOEBE-BIRD

UNDER the eaves, out of the wet,
You nest within my reach;
You never sing for me and yet
You have a golden speech.

You sit and quirk a rapid tail,
Wrinkle a ragged crest,
Then pirouette from tree to rail
And vault from rail to nest.

And when in frequent, dainty fright
You grayly slip and fade,
And when at hand you re-alight
Demure and unafraid,

And when you bring your brood its fill
Of iridescent wings
And green legs dewy in your bill,
Your silence is what sings.

*Neighbors and
the Countryside*

Not of a feather that enjoys
 To prate or praise or preach,
O phoebe, with so little noise,
 What eloquence you teach!

GHOSTS OF INDIANS

INDIAN-FOOTED move the mists
From the corner of the lake,
Silent, sinuous and bent;
And their trailing feathers shake,
Tremble to forgotten leapings,
While with lingerings and creepings
Down they lean again to slake
The dead thirst of parching mouths,
Lean their pale mouths in the lake.

Indian-footed move the mists
That were hiding in the pine,
Out upon the oval lake
In a bent and ghostly line
Lean and drink for better sleeping . . .
Then they turn again and—creeping,
Gliding as with fur and fins—
Disappear through woods and water
On a thousand moccasins.

POPLARS

POPLARS against a mountain
Seem frequently to me
To be little-windowed cities
And sun-waves on the sea.

Perhaps dead men remember
Those beckonings of fire,
Waves that have often crumbled
And windows of desire . . .

Another year and some one,
Standing where I now stand,
Shall watch my tree rekindle,
From ancient sea and land—

The beckoning of an ocean,
The beckoning of a town,
Till the sun's behind the mountain
And the wind dies down.

A THRUSH IN THE MOONLIGHT

IN came the moon and covered me with wonder,
Touched me and was near me and made me
very still.

In came a rush of song, like rain after thunder,
Pouring importunate on my window-sill.

I lowered my head, I hid it, I would not see nor
hear,

The birdsong had stricken me, had brought the
moon too near.

But when I dared to lift my head, night began to
fill

With singing in the darkness. And then the
thrush grew still.

And the moon came in, and silence, on my window-
sill.

III.—CHILDREN AND DEATH

*Children and meadows darken with the rain—
Before the sun comes by them up the lane.*

LULLABY

“**I**’LL send you now sailing across the sea,
I’ll send you now sailing away—
Out where the fishes love to be,
Out where the gulls
Are at play.

“But soon you’ll come sailing from
far away,
Come sailing from over the sea—
Back where my baby loves to stay,
Back again home
To me.”

AS A CHILD

LET me in death but slip away
From people and the light of day
As when a child I found my rest
On my mother's soothing breast.

Let them not come and sit around
With solemn face and whispered sound!—
Such comfort I have never known
As with my mother all alone.

KIDS

“**H**EY, I’ve found some money-wort,
Some day I’ll be rich!—
Or I wonder if it’s checkerberry?—
I don’t know which is which.

“Look, don’t touch that blade of grass,
Just keep away from it!
For see that frothy bubbly ball?—
That’s snake-spit!

“Cover your lips, the darning-needle
Loves to sew ’em up!—
Who likes butter? Lift your chin—
Here’s a buttercup.

“She loves me—she loves me not—
I wish that I knew why
It always comes a different way
Every time I try.

Grenstone

“How many children?—Here you are—
You can have three blows—
And you don't want many children,
For you have to buy 'em clo'es.

“Now we can take the stems, see,
And wet 'em into curls
And stick 'em in our hair and run
And make believe we're girls.

“D'y' ever whistle a blade of grass?
Look, I got a fat one . . .
You slit it, see? Here's one for you—
There's no snake-spit on that one.

“Aren't big people funny
That they don't want to play?
And some of 'em don't like ice-cream—
I couldn't be that way.

“They just sit round and talk and talk—
O' course their hands are clean.
But they make us wash ours all the time.
I couldn't be that mean,

*Children and
Death*

"No, honestly I couldn't,
Could you? I'd sooner die.
We'll dig some worms to-morrow
And go fishin'! Goo'-by!"

WINNER OF SECOND

LOOK me in the face, Tom,
Give me your hand to shake!
I saw you run your race, Tom,
And I saw the sudden break
Bring hot upon your forehead
The anger asking why;
And there were more who saw it,
Others as well as I.

We tried to make a protest,
We crowded round the track;
But the judges had not noticed
His arm that swung you back.
Although that's what they're for, Tom,
To spy a fault or foul,
We liked you for all the more, Tom,
For swiftness of your soul.

*Children and
Death*

You heard the winner's statement
And silently you backed
His word without abatement
Of your knowledge of the fact.
But, Tom, the dust shall thicken
On a forgotten prize,
And victory shall quicken
In your remembered eyes!

THE SNOWBALL

“**E**ACH year a fuller year surely preferred
To all the others,” was old age’s word . .

Till like a well-aimed snowball came the cry
Of youth, running and impudent, “You lie!”

THE BIRTHDAY

A LAUGHING, panting little Pan,
A happy Pete on his fourth birthday,
Dropping his arms of golden tan,
Solemn a moment, suddenly ran
Back to his play.

Then, "What's the matter?" said Pete to me,
Hearing me laugh, hearing me sigh . . .
"I'm not so young as I used to be,"
I answered—and quick as a bird said he,
"Neither am I!"

A PLAYMATE

PETE'S little arms are wide,
He runs to us.
We open ours—
He laughs; he is not there.

We hold a candle by his bed
To look at him asleep,
And when we move it near his
lips,
Out it goes!—

DARKNESS

DARKNESS, when he thought of it,
 Meant to him something he must
 dread,
And when we left we always lit
 A candle by his bed.

But now he will not ask for light,
 The candle's little flame is blown;
And we leave him lying every night
 In darkness of his own.

GRASSES

HE picked us clover leaves and starry grass
And buttercups and chickweed. One by
one,

Smiling he brought them. We can never pass
A roadside or a hill under the sun
Where his wee flowers will not return with him,
His little weeds and grasses, cups that brim
With sunbeams, leaves grown tender in the dew.

Come then, O come with us and each in turn,
Children and elders, let us thread a few
Of all the daisies; to enfold his urn
And fade beside this day through which he passes,
Bringing us clover leaves and starry grasses.

AN OLD ELEGY

EARTH with flowers on his eyes,
Be thou as sweet as he—
Be thou as light where now he lies
As he was light on thee!

POOR RICHARD

(*"What's the use of a new-born child?"—BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.*)

WHAT'S the use of a new-born child? . . .
To raise the dead heart?— to set wild
The fettered hope?—to comfort sorrow—
With the old whispering lie: "Tomorrow?"

Whether he take the morrow by the hand
And disappear with it and come no more—
Whether he live, like men before,
And fail to understand
And so can only borrow
From some other new-born child
That same tomorrow
He himself had brought when first he smiled—
O what's the use of a new-born child? . . .

Poor Richard!—
He made his mark in earth and sky,
But never knew the reason why.
Neither do you; neither do I.
Poor Richard!

CHANGE

LITTLE white hearse
Gone down the street—
If on his bright and unbruised feet
He should come back
With life still sweet,
Only to change to a different hack,
The little white hearse
Grown big and black,
Would it be worse?

HOSTELRY

THE doorway opens on a crumbled inn
Whose windy sign is creaking overhead
With worms and weather, where a name had
 been,
Telling the empty title of the dead . . .

Was he a hard man in his time of gain?
Or were his cronies costly to his purse?
Had he a wife? And was she wise or vain?
Did many mourners follow at his hearse?

I asked a barefoot girl out in the road
Silently watching me, conquering her fears,
To name the host of this antique abode.
“O, he’s been dead,” she said, “for years and
 years.”

I asked in Grenstone Village. No one knew.
I asked the wasted signboard overhead.
I heard the hinges and the wind that blew,
Crying the empty title of the dead.

*Children and
Death*

His ledger broken, debt and debtor gone,
His corner dark with rottenness and rust,
Somewhere mine host was paying flesh and bone
To lengthen out his lodging in the dust.

GOOD LADS

GREENLY hid, with drops of red,
Wild strawberries are sweeter bred
Among these Grenstone graves and stones
Than in a field of fewer bones.

There's many a good lad under clay;
And I'm not sure but that's the way
Will keep them young and clean and good
And happier than living could.

For let him run or let him read,
Or lift a flower or fling a weed,
Or stain his mouth with mortal feast,
He learns the most who learns the least,

That many a good lad yet on ground
Has sought for fair and never found;
A thing you cannot surely say
Of good lads lying under clay.

LUCK

L UCK was the lass he chased,
Seeking the wide world over,
But she laughed his love to waste
With many a lighter lover.

Now though his life is paid
And no more shall he love her,
Luck loves, like any jade,
One who is careless of her.

Now where he lies abed
And never stirs the cover,
And never turns his head—
She will not leave her lover.

JUDD

“O THEY were quiet, they were kind
A month ago to-day,
The neighbors and the minister—
And only Judd away!

“He lay beside me thirty years
And now lies under the snow
Over which the neighbors drive
And whistle as they go.

“It never can be death to them,
No matter what they say,
Until they sit alone like me
And listen to a sleigh.”

SINGING PAST THE CEMETERY

SINGING past the cemetery,
Flowers in their curls,
Thinking of their loves and merry,
Goes a line of girls.

Grenstone girls are gay and twenty
On the first of May—
Grenstone graves are gray and plenty
Any day.

But I must not sing of sorrow,
Lest someone say
Sorrow's not a thing to borrow
But to ward away.

Though Grenstone graves be plain and
plenty
On the first of May—
Yet Grenstone girls are vain and twenty
Any day.

THE FARMER

FARMER PALFREY was a man
Excellent, wise and sober,
Whose life in 1812 began
And ended last October.

And there's a boy aged 51,
Reading it upside-down,
Farmer Palfrey's youngest son,
The drunkard of the town.

THE MINER

HE'LL never miss his strike,
For here where he is laid
He proves all luck alike
Of common clay is made.

He's followed many an ore,
But it's been hit or miss—
He never turned before
So sure a dust as this.

HEIGHO

WHILE dead men rest, and live men
rove,

And moons and mountains come and go,
Soon as the right hearts cleave in love—
I am!—Heigho!

A dangling, dear, forbidden sweet—
A swift, forbidden, conquering blow—
A rush of fire from head to feet—
I will!—Heigho!

What is the gain for man and wife?
What is the harvest we shall grow,
That we must sow the seed of life?
I know!—Heigho!

While dead men rest, and live men rove,
And moons and mountains come and go,
Soon as the spadefuls close above,
I was!—Heigho!

ENOUGH

A HILL with little breezes and with me
Close to its side, holding a book of love
To lull in tune with tremors of the grove :
Enough of life, enough of history.

A field of mortal fragrance from the breath
Of men soft sunken in the roots of flowers,
Infinite peace around the troubled hours :
Enough of mystery, enough of death.

And then myself to enter in and be
With hill and field and root, part of the breeze,
Moss for a violet, sap of the trees :
Enough of will, enough of destiny.

NOCTURNE

SOFT through a mist there's a memory creep-
ing,

To tell you in dreams that are wistful and low,
Soft through the mist between waking and sleep-
ing—

Of love as she came to you long, long ago . . .

Tells you of love as a deathless maiden

Who plays with a moonbeam and laughs like a
child . . .

Her eyes are how full!—and her lashes how
laden

With starlight!—her glances how level and
mild!

See how her finger-tips fitfully glisten!

See with what wonder her forehead is deep!—

She breathes, and you tremble . . . she waits,
and you listen . . .

She waits, and you breathe not . . . she
breathes . . . and you sleep.

IV. DALLIANCE

*Then sometimes, as we skip along for fun,
Our shoe-laces and duties come undone.*

TOMORROW

WHILE you watch the sad moon,
Dawn comes unawares,
With her finger on her lip
Steals up the stairs,
With a bird on her shoulder
Glides up the stairs,
And sets her bird startling you
With little green airs . . .

*"Stop mooning,
My boy,
Laugh sorrow
Away,
Be tuning
For joy!
It's tomorrow—
Today!"*

THE NAUGHTY ANGEL

THREE churches has Grenstone
All on one street;
Also a graveyard
Kept very neat,
Where a vigilant guide
For the passenger's eye,
A maiden of marble,
Points to the sky.

The man who designed her
Had meant her to say:
"Come, good little children
Of heaven this way!"—
But with hand gaily lifted
And angle all wrong
She capers and says:
"Have some fun!—come along!"

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

HE closed the windows tight all ten,
Bolted and shuttered them all,
Lest he should happen to lean on a sill
And lose his balance and fall.

He sat in the middle and glibly prayed
A thankful, mechanical prayer
And closed his eyes and fell asleep—
And died for lack of air.

A WANDERER

AS when a bird alights at sea,
I found you and you rested me.

Out of the ocean's infinite foam,
I found you and I made you home.

But soon again I wandered free—
For so a sea-bird loves the sea.

O, I HAVE SEEN IN GRENSTONE

O I HAVE seen in Grenstone
How generous and how fond
Benedick is toward every one,
Before he gives his bond.

On other days than Christmas
His good-will apprehends
A world filled high as bins in the fall
With golden-hearted friends,

And on other days than May-day
He merits and discovers
A world filled bright as woods in spring
With unbounded lovers.

But Benedick once married
Must lead a straitened life,
With the world, east, west and
north and south,
Bounded by a ——

MARRIAGE

SHALL marriage never be the glory
That was wooed?—
But ever enervate and vex,
Obstruct, intrude,
And make more wistful and complex
The solitude,
Trying to tell the human story
To its brood?

No matter how the homes are humming
In a mood
Of ecstasy or sentiment
Or love renewed,
What eager two can circumvent
The mortal feud?—
Till both in one shall die—becoming
Multitude.

ONE DAY WHEN I RODE PEGASUS

SHE caroled on a Grenstone lane,
She had a song for every tree;
They leaned to her and one by one
They walked with her for company . . .
I rode behind on Pegasus
And hoped that she would turn and see.

How could I wait? I spurred ahead
And spied the poems on her cheek
And begged of her to sing again.
She only smiled. Perhaps to pique
The gentleman on Pegasus,
She only smiled. She would not speak.

"Tell me but this," I humored her,
"In all the sadness of the spring,
The secret of such happiness,
And I will ride till highroads ring!"
She said—her eyes were full of tears—
"Let me alone and I will sing!"

THE MIRROR

O THERE'S hardly a daughter of Eve so
cold

That a mirror can't cozen and flatter,
And her heart grows young that was growing
old!—

And what does a wrinkle matter?

The secret is this, that her vanity leaps
With a sudden attention, that otherwise sleeps,
And the best that is in her, matron or lass,
Is awake like a throb to the heart of the glass.

Now you have no vanity, none of the art—
But there's one way I wish you were vain!
Why don't you happen to look in my heart?—
And like it and look there again?

THE SECRET

“**T**AKING women as they come,
I like them better as they go”—
That was what I used to say
And smile to have it so.

Liking women as they went,
That was the way I wisely chose . . .
Why I asked one not to go—
God only knows.

THE COQUETTE

SHE loves me and she loves me not,
According to her whim;
For when another's on the spot
Her love is all for him.

But I've been told a double cure:
I'll simply let her be
And care no more, until I'm sure
Her love is all for me.

And then I'll care enough to say,
"Go and love him and him!
For I but loved you yesterday—
According to your whim."

But first I'll give her one more chance
To prove her constancy,
For, O, I know it by her glance,
Her love is all for me!

THE SKEPTIC

WHAT shall I do, who may not be
Beside you nor away?
Away I crave you, but, dear me,
I doubt you if I stay—

Yes, doubt you with your equal eyes
Of knowledge and of youth—
Your lovely wonders must be lies . . .
And yet they may be truth!

Too hopeful not to come and see,
Too skeptical to stay,
What shall I do who may not be
Beside you nor away!

A BALLAD OF UNDAUNTED YOUTH

AS soon as I could stammer
I opened on the day,
For often is adventure
Begun in just that way—
Then I held my breath and listened
To hear what she might say.

She lived in a Grenstone farmhouse,
Its chimney-top just showed . . .
We went to it by pasture,
Which was farther than by road;
Said Helen, "You may board there"—
A beating heart's abode!

Her hand was bright at breakfast.
And sunlight on her head
I clearer saw at dinner
Than the butter on my bread.
And evenings, like a deaf man,
I heard her go to bed.

I might have spent my money
And my heart there half a year,
For this daughter of her father
Became so shrewdly dear
That I drew her never nearer,
Though she was ever near.

She would not mend my yearning,
She would not break my heart,
She would not let me clasp her
As a death-struck moth will dart
Into consuming brightness
Till breath and body part.

So I made a formal offer.
And she answered that she knew
She was likely to be asked for
By suitors not a few—
An answer inoffensive,
But discouraging and true.

Wanly I thought about it,
Two weeks went by in gloom.
I refused to climb the mountain

Grenstone

With the rest, or leave my room—
Where I thought of only Helen,
Her brightness and her bloom . . .

Yet when to-day I saw her
Wandering hand in hand
With a foolish farmer-fellow,
I could not understand
How features in a fortnight
Could grow so dull and bland . . .

Not Helen but her father
Is the person I prefer,
Who talks to us at evening—
The nation's arbiter.
And though Helen often comments,
We never notice her.

But when Jean, the quiet sister
And exquisite though shy,
Offers a thoughtful question,
We always make reply . . .
And I watch Jean in her corner—
The corner of my eye.

WORLD'S END

IN spite of Grenstone, men will roam,
Such men as Hercules—
But there are orchards nearer home
Which are Hesperides.

Where can the whole world farther lie
Than where these branches are
That daily clasp a bit of sky
And nightly a star?

Plucking gold fruit and great renown,
Would that be better labor
Than borrowing apples red and brown
From an unacquainted neighbor? . . .

O, where I lie adventure lies!
And see!—a farmer's wagon
Conveys at last before my eyes
The daughters of the dragon.

Grenstone

And Jean, the lovelier of the two,
Shall seek among the trees—
O, never doubt that I shall do
As well as Hercules!

THE OLD MILL

I HAD tried for a kiss and been treated with
scorn,
For Jeanie had seemed to see sin in my wish;
But, never a fellow for staying forlorn,
I had tried to forget it and fish.

Just below the old mill, where nobody goes
But one who has need of a healing shade,
Of a leaf and a bird and the flickering flows
In a brook—and of never a maid—

I was borne like a leaf, in a mournful dream,
And was touching a shadowy bank of noon,
When I started upright and I stared overstream,
For I heard a voice laughing a tune.

O, sudden to see, in the water's way,
Came Jean, a twinkle of sun on her face,
And wet to the ankle uttered, "Good-day,"
With her daily composure and grace!

Grenstone

And under a willow that shivers and dips
I ran and we met in the midst of the brook,
And so she forgave by the touch of her lips—
And so what I wanted I took.

A MOMENT

TIME, I caught it, fluttering time,
 I caught it in my net.
Its two wings were the perfect rhyme—
And O, I have it yet
Where it cannot fly nor climb . . .
The golden pin is set!

SUN AND MOON

WHEN we met where apple-boughs
 Leaned to lure a lover's vows,
When the tiniest apple-bud
Was a signal for the blood
To tingle in the finger-tip
Or the cheek or the lip,
When we felt all nature move
For a final beat of love—
Then the sun rose up to look
Dimly, softly through the trees,
And advised us in the breeze
To be iron, to deny.
Tell me, Jean, O tell me why,
When every little bird made fun
Of that whispering of the sun,
Why we still should give it heeding
And refuse each other's pleading,
Turn from each and each forsake
And almost let our two hearts break? . . .
“Dear!—before the sun's new rising,
Is there not a moon advising?”

IN LOVE

TO a star cried a starling:
 "I want to get out
Of this cage all about,
O, I want to get out,
Boo-hoo!"

But said I to my darling:
 "This cage all about
Has us in beyond doubt,
But who wants to get out!
Do you?"

YOUNG EDEN

FLUSHED from an orchard flagon,
My country-love and I
Sat by a tree, forgetting
Old conscience and his fretting,
Watched, where the sun was setting,
Trouble trundle by—
Like some old dragon
Loaded on a wagon
Drawn against the sky.

*Fol de rol de raly O!
Trouble in the sky!*

I pointed out a dangling claw;
She knew it was only a cloud I saw,
But she let me say my say—
For the day, red-ripe, was a pretty day
And she thought my way was a city way . . .
And she knew I liked to have her think—while
each unhindered curl

Glinted in the sunlight, hinted of its yellow—
That I who talked to such a girl
Was something of a fellow.

Fol de rol de raly O!
Was she really thinking so?

“There’s the tree,” I gaily told her,
“Come, before we’re one day older!
Apples, apples, at our feet,
We shall gather, we shall eat!
Now’s the time for apple hunger—
Not if we were one day younger,
Younger, older, shyer, bolder,
Would an apple taste so sweet!”

Fol de rol de raly O!
Apples at our feet!

Bewildered, she was with me on the run
Toward the tree that held its treasure to the sun;
This, of all the trees of treasure, was the one
Condemning leisure,
One inviting lovely pleasure—
She was with me, she was by me on the run,
With a cheek that turned its treasure to the sun.

Grenstone

Fol de rol de raly O!

Raly O, we gaily go,

Fol—

Why should she stop and never speak?
Why should the color in her cheek
Change—not glowing gay, but meek?—
Deeper, redder than I knew,
She was mistress of, a hue,
Though demurely,
Richly, surely
Rising in her cheek!

Fol de rol de raly O!

The change in her cheek!

There before us on the ground,
Eyes upon us, not a sound,
Sat a runaway, a girl of seven years.
Her lap was full of sunny gold,
But her eyes in the sun, her eyes were old,
Were sober, seeming laden—
And such a little maiden—
Unawares but laden
With some dead woman's tears.

Fol de rol de raly O!
A child of seven years!

Some woman who had watched and wept,
But had no living speech,
Watched and wept now within that little breast,
Caught and caressed
Those little hands and would have kept
Beyond their reach
The anguish in that orchard,
The apple-bough unblessed,
The brightness that has tortured
The heart within the breast . . .
And we beheld, can see it even now,
A bent and withered apple-bough
Of beauty dispossessed,
Which bore a bane from long ago—
Yet seemed to us, who wished it so,
To bear the orchard's best . . .
It was the bough that leaves no rest
To the heart within the breast.

Fol de rol de raly O!
This heart within the breast!

Grenstone

Abashed and parting on our ways,
We saw that woman's helpless hand
Cease from making its demand

And ghostly fade and sad . . .

We saw the child, forgetful of our gaze,
Laughing like any child that plays,
Laughing in any land,
Lean and touch a toy she had
Half-hidden in her hand,
We saw her pat and poise and raise—
An apple in her hand!

Fol de rol de raly O!

The apple in her hand! . . .

Yet youth came back again among the trees
To find an apple of its own—
What good are warnings given men
To let that tree alone
And when were women ever known
To do but as they please?
And so we two came back again,
As though we had not known . . .

Fol de rol de raly O!

For an apple of our own!

BLOW HOT, BLOW COLD

LAST night or several nights ago,
In moontime it is hard to be pre-
cise,
The twilight was a down of snow,
The moon a blade of ice.
But we were warm.

Tonight the overflowing moon
Has poured its mist and made the
valley swim
Through silent lengths of a lagoon,
Warm and deep and dim.
But we are cold.

BATTLES LONG AGO

I WAS a god of battles then
And governed as I chose
The fortunes of my metal men
And conquered all my foes.

But now, no longer safe outside
Like that almighty elf,
I have forgotten how to guide
Myself against myself!

THE SEEKER

THE idiot came with a bobbing pace;
And when I passed her by,
She raised her head as if to face
Asylums in the sky.

I looked, I stopped, I said good-day,
I asked her what she found.
Like stone, she would not move nor say
A word nor make a sound . . .

Till suddenly upon her track
She turned, no longer dumb,
And, answering, went ambling back
The road that she had come.

She moaned, "Dear me, I've lost the way,
Forgotten it again!"
I wondered if I ought to say,
"So, madam, have all men."

GOD'S FOOL

“ONCE I fell asleep!—
And lost a child.
At first I stopped to weep,
But now the wild
Nights know me, how I keep
The signs compiled . . .
And the first time God's asleep,
I'll find the child!”

TREASURE

A SHIP came in one colored day
Through rain and sun.
The rainbow waited in the bay—
The wealth was won.

Reaching at last the treasure-pot,
The golden hoard,
A ship came in . . . but there was not
A soul aboard.

THE RIDER

I'VE a galloping heart that can never stay still,
But must hurry away and be over a hill—
Though there's nothing to find there but sunset or
rain,
O the beat of the hoofs of my heart again! . . .
Ho for the stirrups and who shall say stop
Till I look on the sea from a mountain-top!

I've a limping heart that has gone all day,
A heart that has worn its breath away,
And every stone in the path is a pain—
O the drag of the hoofs of my heart again,
Limping, limping, and not any rest,
And the mountain still far up in the west!

THE HEART OF GOLD

I HAD a heart as good as gold
For spending or for buying;
It bought me many a hand to hold
And many a breath for sighing.

It bought me many a mouth to kiss,
And many a secret token—
O, what's the good of all of this,
Now when my heart is broken?

My heart that once, as good as gold,
Bought anything that mattered
Is like a tale completely told,
Like golden money scattered . . .

But somewhere there's a heart so young
It still can spare for spending,
Will sing the song that I have sung,
Beginning with my ending.

ONCE OF ALL MY FRIENDS

ONCE of all my friends and cronies
First was my own heart and best,
But aggrieved my heart rebuked me
And I broke it in my breast.

Now my body laughs and offers
Any sum I bid it lend;
And I borrow and I borrow—
And I spend and I spend.

THE DEAD LOON

THERE is a dead loon in the camp to-night
 killed by a clever fool,
And down the lake a live loon calling.
The wind comes stealing, tall, muscular and cool,
From his plunge where stars are falling—
The wind comes creeping, stalking,
On his night-hidden trail,
Up to the cabin where we sit playing cards and
 talking.
And only I, of them all, listen and grow pale.
He glues his face to the window, addressing only
 me,
Talks to me of death and bids me hark
To the hollow scream of a loon and bids me see
The face of a clever fool reflected in the dark.
That dead loon is farther on the way than we are.
It has no voice with which to answer while we
 wait.
But it is with me now and with the evening star . . .
Its voice is my voice and its fate my fate.

OBLIVION

I HEAR his claws in the bark
Crawling up the tree of life—
I throw him all I have.

V. WISDOM AND UNWISDOM

*How we resolve and reason and explain
The various ways we take the sun and rain!*

BEAUTY

OUT of the deep August night slips an arrowy moment,
A shooting-star,
And, as if that one change
Had once more set the firmament in motion,
I with the bright breath of a poem
Slipping to me from the zenith
Find that I must have wound the clock of heaven
without knowing,
For I can hear it striking
And the north pole and the south pole echoing in
unison
And glaciers scampering away from the sound
like rabbits—
And I smile higher and higher
With the key.

TO YOURSELF

TALKING to people in well-ordered ways is
 prose,
And talking to them in well-ordered ways or in
 disordered outbreak may be poetry.
But talking to yourself, out on a country road, no
 houses and no hedges to conceal a listener,
Only yourself and heaven and the trees and a wind
 and a linnet;
Talking to yourself in those long breaths that sing
 or hum or whistle fullness of the heart,
Or the short breaths,
Beats of the heart,
Whether it be of sadness or a haystack,
Mirth or the smell of the sea,
A cloud or luck or love,
Any of these or none—
Is poetry.

TO MYSELF

I SPOKE aloud, as a poet should,
What a wise man ought to say,
And, though I knew that it was good,
People turned away.

Then to myself I breathed a word
Which I could not understand,
And in a twinkling people heard
And took me by the hand.

And by that simple touch of hand
They answered my intent,
And I did not have to understand
Exactly what I meant.

THE NEW LIFE

PERHAPS they laughed at Dante in his youth,
Told him that truth
Had unappealably been said
In the great masterpieces of the dead.
Perhaps he listened and but bowed his head
In acquiescent honor, while his heart
Held natal tidings that a new life is the part
Of every man that's born,
A new life and a new expectant art.
It is the variations of the morn
That are forever, more and more,
The single dawning of the single truth . . .
So answers Dante to the heart of youth.

WISDOM

OLD man, if I only knew
A quick way to be wise like you!

“Young man, this is all I know
To impart before I go:
You must keep your goal in sight,
Labor toward it day and night,
Then at last arriving there—
You shall be too old to care.”

You would even wiser be,
Old man, were you young like me.

FOLLY

MY sense is in my lack of it—
The world must have its fool—
Let others bear the pack of it
In palace, church and school,
While, watchful in my wandering heart
And steadfast in my folly,
I come upon a court, apart
From all their melancholy . . .

Kingdom, but not by track of it,
Entrance, but not by rule,
Where the gold is in the lack of it
And the crown is for the fool—
Where, for music, I need only move
And hear the praises ring
From every little bell I love,
Addressing me as king!

A SAIL

HEARING them snarl over bones
Down yonder,
I will listen fonder
To the brawl that stones
Make in a brook,
Or lower my head
To the smile of the dead
In a quiet old book.

And I shall wander
Wherever I must
And trust
In the world, but not ponder
Nor dig golden gravel
To bury my face—
But from place to green place
I shall travel.

What use
Is the hardness of money
Compared to soft honey?
It had much better go to the deuce!—
I shall sweeten my lips, on the va-
grant trail,
With berry and fruit-bearing tree,
Till I come to the edge of the sea—
And a sail!

A GRENSTONE GLADE

ON the way
To a Grenstone glade
Yesterday
I met a maid
Who was raven-dark,
And I listened to her ditty;
For the maid was very
pretty—
So hark!—

*“Many things
Show us how
Love brings
Women woe!”*

On the way
From a Grenstone glade
I met to-day
Another maid;

She was yellow-fair;
And I listened to her ditty;
For the maid had very pretty
Long hair:

*“Little ghosts
Whisper how
Love costs
Women woe!”*

So they'll sing;
Though they'll mean
Not a thing
That they sing,
Till they come
To their own
And are dumb
And alone.

TO NO ONE IN PARTICULAR

LOCATE your love, you lose your love;
Find her, you look away . . .
Though mine I never quite discern,
I trace her every day.

She has a thousand presences,
As surely seen and heard
As birds that hide behind a leaf
Or leaves that hide a bird.

Single your love, you lose your love,
You cloak her face with clay;
Now mine I never quite discern—
And never look away.

BE NOT TOO FRANK

BE not too frank, if you would reach
A woman's heart, be not too kind
Nor too severe, but keep your speech
And all your manners uninclined.

Assert but briefly self-control;
Then watch her come to you intent
To give direction to your soul
And make indifference different.

THE NEW LOVE

CONTENT beneath a lulling tree
That I and crickets know,
To keep awake, I count the birds;
They twitter to and fro.

You think no girl could ever love
So dull a lad as this?
You never knew a neater girl
Than one I used to kiss.

And yet I did not dally long,
Nor want her here with me:
The sun and I are keeping tryst—
And why should we be three?

THE BALANCE

LOSE your heart, you lose the maid;
It's the humor of her kind.

So trim the balance to a shade;
Keep your heart and keep the maid!

Keep your heart, you keep the maid,
But yourself you cannot find . . .
Fling the balance unafraid!
Find your heart—and lose the maid!

VI.—THE OLD CRY

*And in the very midst of explanation,
We cry the single cry of all creation.*



CAPTURE

ALITHE, dark-bodied fisher-boy, naked in
the sea,

One warm spring morning early, swimming far
out, caught his breath,

Not from a rush of the sea, but from a quick,
bright-bodied girl

Who, laughing westward toward him, skimmed
the waves with her white feet.

He could not cleave the water, it was iron at his
breast,

But he struck and broke the coiling chains and
scattered them aside

And headlong followed her in the foam, and his
lips were salt and sang

Of her beauty. Plunging ashore where she had
vanished in the woods,

Seizing his net as though it were his love to cover
her,

He watched her where she was running, lighting
the trunks of trees that she passed,

Grenstone

And he gained on her, drew nearer, and the chase
 was so swift
That over many hills and valleys he had followed
 her,
And the wave was not yet dry on his body, and
 the net he bore
Had not ceased dripping. Then he cast the net,
 a silver maze,
And captured her, a rose of dew. I saw her stop
 and sway,
For I had roused when they went by, and I heard
 her say to him,
Out on my hilltop, laughing, "I am the morning-
 sun. And you?"
"I am the morning-sea," he answered and he held
 her close.
They clung together breathless on the rim. It
 was the dawn.

YOUTH

I CARE not what you bring to me,
I care not what you take . . .
Be nothing else but only young
And—though my heart shall break—

Be nothing else but only young
And hear me call you hither,
And count on me to age and die
Before your youth shall wither!

A PRAYER FOR BEAUTY

GIVE her such beauty of body and mind
As the leaves of an aspen tree
When they vary from silver to green in the wind,
And who shall be lovely as she—
Then give her the favor of harking to love
As the heart of a wood to the call of a dove!—
And give her the beauty of following free
As a cloud in the sky or a wave in the sea!

Give her such purity vivid with light
As the wonder of passion can be,
Aware in the day and rapt in the night,
And none shall be lovely as she!—
O, give her the fortune a lover may find
In the sharing of beauty of body and mind,
The paramount beauty of giving, that she
Shall immortally give it!—But give her to me!

A LANE IN GRENSTONE

THE lane at night is dimly lit
Through many a deepening tree,
And few there are who travel it,
And none of them with me.

But there's a step I cannot learn,
A foot I cannot trace,
Which follows me at every turn
With faint familiar pace.

Perhaps forgotten time ago
I wandered here content
With one I shall not fully know
Till all the years are spent,

With someone who was kind to me . . .
But only this is clear:
I wish that she would let me see
Her face and be my dear.

VII. CELIA

*And O, how suddenly the cry rings true,
Changing, no longer saying I—but You!*

CELIA

FROM the lane I turn to look,
Till my eyes are cool with seeing:
Bright before me comes a brook
Out of branches into being.

And behind me, while I turn,
Follows the familiar pace . . .
Till, at last, I look and learn—
Seeing Celia face to face.

Out of whispers of concealment,
Like the brook, my Celia slips,
Bringing me the dear revealment—
For I ask her, and her lips

Tell me that where leaves were green
Close beside her often moved
Some one she had never seen,
Some one she had always loved.

THE EARLY GODS

IT is the time of violets.
It is the very day
When in the shadow of the wood
Spring shall have her say,
Remembering how the early gods
Came up the violet way.
Are there not violets
And gods—
To-day?

INTERPRETER

WHEN people with their dollars
And their propriety
Would tighten like high collars
Around the neck of me,
I used to journey out by train
And tramp good miles of mud
To find the world set right again
In some spring leaf or bud.

But now I need not wander
Remotely from my kind,
For I should carry yonder
But Celia in my mind.
And is it sensible, finding a tree
Pleasanter than faces?—
When she combines humanity
With all the woodland places.

SEAS AND LEAVES

THEY had told me of you, of your beauty,
But I was skeptical and shook my head.
Beauty was empty, I had proven; I had followed
every beckon of it.
Traversed the world of it, touched all its ports
And—having touched them all and come away
again—I was uncomforted . . .
“There is no beauty,” I believed and said,
“But at the vessel’s prow.
Only the foam is beautiful
That flies before the voyage and is gone.”

They had told me of you, of your wisdom,
But I was wiser still and shook my head.
For I had listened, both in city and in country,
On farms, at funerals,
And under trees and over wine and through the
touch of hands,
To people wise in all variety;
But none of them, not one,

Had brought me wisdom to unwind the years
And make a fair beginning toward some end . . .
“There is no wisdom,” I believed and said,
“But in the ship’s wake
Where the waves
Cover their noise again with the great sea.”

But I have seen you,
And have heard you speak—
Have seen the rippling seas glance in your face
And in your mouth have heard the rippling leaves
Consult together.

IN MANY STREETS

THE day is over and I have not seen you;
You are away from Grenstone . . .

And when I walked your street awhile,
I knew that other men were passing you,
Not seeing you, not heeding you—
Blinder than I had long been to your beauty
And deafer than I to your wisdom . . .

Just as I pass life,
Unknown to me,
In many streets.

YES

HOW every sun shone quicker, every flame,
And every starbeam stirred
When you received me, when you said my name
And then the radiant word!

Invisible, tremendous, comes the night,
Eternity . . .
But I can pierce it with enough of light
To see!

THE TOUCH OF YOU

AT the touch of you,
As if you were an archer with your swift
hand at the bow,
The arrows of delight shot through my body . . .

You were spring
And I the edge of a cliff—
And a shining waterfall rushed over me.

ON EARTH

IT is not that your winding hair
Is blown, but that the winds are there . . .
O, let me lean my throat to feel
Those fainting breaths of summer steal
Into a calm—then gather fast
And rise into a lightning-blast!

It is not that your breast is bare,
But the heart of life is beating there . . .
O, let me lean my head and hark
To love instead of any lark!—
What worth has heaven's highest bird
When this upon the earth is heard?

ROSE-TIME

WHAT though love require no test,
In this rose-time after rain
Let me touch your hand again!—
Since caressing reassures
Lovers that their love endures,
Now, whatever dark may come,
Now, before our mouths are dumb,
While away the twilight slips—
Celia, let me kiss your lips! . . .
Until dawn shall be as blue
As the little veins of you
At the temple and the breast.

CHARIOTS

I NEVER saw the morning till to-day;
I never knew how soon night went away—
Day merely came a regular event;
Night merely went . . .

Now day and night are chariots for me,
Since I have learned their mystery from you:
Day holding one and moving solemnly—
Night holding two.

WHEN THE FIRST BIRD SANG

I LOVED you, loved you, with your unseen
eyes

Sweet to my lips in nearnesses of night,
Sweet to my fingers that were trembling light
Upon your face to prove my true surmise
Of eyes that opened, witnessing with mine.
There had not been a sign nor ray of sight,
But only love to prompt my guess aright! . . .
Then dawn revealed you slowly line by line.

At first I held away your dreaming face
From my face. Till the dark-blue light was keen,
Still, still I held it—though my passion beat
For it. And then all heaven on that place
Came down, since nothing ever to be seen
Again could hide your eyes, so wild, so sweet!

SAPPHICS FOR CELIA

(Echoing the Greek)

SWEETER than a harp is the voice of
Sappho . . .

*Let me swing the door to the living garden—
Let me lead you, Celia, where Sappho wanders
Singing forever.*

I

Long ago I dreamed, as a little fellow,
Dreams of rosy girls who were scornful of me,
Dreams of being mighty to win them over,
Making them like me.

I remember later, in lusty boyhood,
Seeing certain faces indifferent toward me
Softened, turn and offer themselves for kisses,
Even unwilling.

Grenstone

Now, O dreams and passions, I need your
magic . . .

I have found a woman to love in terror,
Terror lest at last I be unavailing,
Loving too deeply.

II

I believe this miracle cannot happen :
Any woman ever be born to sunlight
With a gift of wisdom, of exquisite wisdom,
Equal to Celia's . . .

I believe that, hearing to-day her laughter
Lighter than a harp, is to hear it always.
In my spirit's house there can be from henceforth
No lamentation.

III

Love is in her lips as in apple blossoms
Creeps a wind, and love is upon her fingers,
Faint and subtle zephyr as ever followed
Leaves that were trembling.

IV

He becomes a god who has felt her presence . . .

Proof forever answering all the questions
Whether man shall die in his earthy stature,
Never be god-like.

Made divine by even a moment of her,
My two arms can reach till they touch the heavens . . .

Yet I stand swept dry of my life, like white-burnt
Grass in the summer.

V

Many stars which once I beheld in heaven,
Stars that shone with each an especial brightness,
Lose their fading gleam in a larger glory—
Celia, the moonlight.

VI

Love is good and never a thing to darken,
Not a thing to hide in a glance or whisper—
If his love be true and if she return it,
Then she should tell me! . . .

Grenstone

Not my Celia's voice but her silence answers:
She has only mercy for me who doubt her,
Only laughing patience for my reproaches . . .
 I am contented.

For I see her face, and forget all others,
Shine on only me with restoring heaven . . .
I am strong again . . . as an oak encounters
 Wind on a mountain.

VII

First the moon went down and the night was
 empty,
Then the Pleiades and the night was empty,
Then the sun came up and the dawn was
 empty . . .
 No one beside me.

Now the moon has risen again in fullness,
Marble-white, a temple of consecration.
What a night to witness the seal of marriage!
 O, what an altar!

Fools who never loved, is the night approaching?
Is there in the darkness a breath of roses?—
Go, then, bloom in love and forever after
 Sweeten the darkness!

*Sweet is blown in darkness the bloom of
 Sappho. . . .
Through the gate that swings to her living garden
We have entered, Celia, where Sappho wanders
 Singing forever.*

ENCOUNTER

YOURS is a presence lovelier than death—
Heavy with blossoms, poignant of the sea!
The dead are magical, but O, your breath
Has given more than lordly death to me . . .
I am your lover and a cloud is my crest,
The headland is my chariot, my waves go four
abreast.

Let me be fleet and sunlit in your sight
A little while, before I charge and drown . . .
Then, O my love, who have so lavished might
On me that I would strike mortality down,
When in the end I fall, trampled by the sea,
Slain by my horses—I shall know your blossoms
blinding me.

A TENT-SONG

TILL we watch the last low star,
Let us love and let us take
Of each other all we are.

On some morning with that star
One of us shall lie awake,
Lonely for the other's sake.

UNDER THE MOUNTAIN

UNDER the mountain is a lovely face,
Under the face a heart!

I have come back again to my own place . . .

But soon I shall depart

Far from the mountain and the face,

Far from the heart.

A SHEPHERD OF STARS

YESTERDAY
I could say—

Stars are my sheep. Nobody clips
Gain of my shepherding.
The air comes cool upon my lips
Like water from a spring,
And out I stretch my finger-tips
And count my flock and sing:

“Come, graze beside me on my hill,
You little starry sheep—
Gather and eat your silver fill
And call me out of sleep
To trace you by your silver trill,
To fold you in my keep.”

Except myself, nobody cares
How many I shall bring—
Save Celia. And no other dares

To steal them while I sing . . .
Yet toward a world of common wares
The wind is beckoning:

“O, come and leave your silly sheep
That wander up and down,
That cannot even earn their keep,
O, come to town, to town!
A countryman is counted cheap,
A shepherd is a clown!”

Stars are my sheep. Nobody knows
How often in the fold
I enter with them when it snows
And cannot feel the cold—
And yet it seems a wise man goes
Where wool and meat are sold.

And today
I must say—

“O starry sheep, good-by, good-by—
Your shepherd goes to town!
But never one of you shall die
To clothe and feed the clown—
For you shall keep my hill, while I
Shall wander up and down.”

II. AWAY FROM GRENSTONE

I. AN INLAND CITY

*After the voice I had always waited for,
O how can there be distance any more?*

MY CITIZEN

IF I were in the country now,
There'd be the roads and hills,
The grasses under sky and bough,
The brooks and straying rills,
Where I might come and find a trace,
In every field, of one dear face.

Here in the city are but bars
To memories and traces,
Where in the streets and in the cars
I see a thousand faces . . .
And yet when all is said and done,
In a thousand faces I see one.

✓ NO MAN'S CLERK

PERHAPS tomorrow he will work
Listlessly again—
This evening he was no man's clerk
He was a king of men.

An unheroic, homely boy,
Sallow and under size,
He passed me, bearing all the joy
Of history in his eyes.

I saw him then, I see him yet,
The funny little churl,
In his mouth a cigarette,
In his eyes—a girl.

ONE OF THE CROWD .

I LONGED, in the woodland yesterday,
To see the fauns come out and play,
To see a satyr try to seize
A dryad's waist—and bark his knees,
To see a river-nymph waylay
And shock him with a dash of spray!—
And I teased, like a child, by brooks and trees,
“Come back again! We need you! Please!
Come back and teach us how to play!”
But nowhere in the woods were they.

I found, when I went in the town to-day
A thousand people on their way
To offices and factories—
And never a single soul at ease;
And how could I help but sigh and say,
“What can it profit them, how can it pay
To strain the eye with rivalries
Until the dark is all it sees?—
Or to manage, more than others may,
To store the wasted gain away?”

*Away from
Grenstone*

But one of the crowd looked up to-day,
With pointed brows. I heard him say,
“Out of the meadows and rivers and trees
We fauns and many companies
Of nymphs have come. And we are these,
These people, each upon his way,
Looking for work, working for pay—
And paying all our energies
To earn true love . . . for, seeming gay,
We fauns were sad,” I heard him say.

WITH A COPY OF "A SHROPSHIRE LAD"

I SEND to you a Shropshire lad,
Who's half-way gay and half-way sad

He whistles of the lasting sleep
A melody to hear and keep,
Beguiling you the little while
You've need to sigh and chance to smile,

And whistles next of happy things
That each unhappy waking brings,
Until you've half forgotten why
You've need to smile and chance to sigh.

You'll find him always, gay or sad,
A friendly little Shropshire lad.

*Away from
Grenstone*

A JUSTICE REMEMBERS LINCOLN

*Y*OU said:

“He was not a gentleman.
But he dropped into my office one day,
As politicians did when they came to town,
And in my rocking-chair
Eased his long legs
And crossed his shins
And settled down.

“My partners noted shrewdness in him
And laughed when his large loose lips
Rolled and relished the ends of stories
Like the ends of cigars,
But for me the cigar-stubs were vile.
All my ancestors rose in me against him,
And I said to them in my soul,
‘It is the penalty,
It is what comes of politics in a republic.’

“After some years I awoke one morning
And said to the ancestors in my soul,
‘It is the end,
The end of the republic’—
For I knew that morning,
With a mortal sickness of pity for my
countrymen,
That they had elected, as their president
for four years,
The vulgarian—
Abraham Lincoln.

“And he went on in the White House,
Even into a second term,
Lolling his legs,
And applying his shrewdness,
And telling his stories,
And being judged.

“And then he was shot and buried . . .

“And after a few years,
By another President,

*Away from
Grenstone*

A gentleman,
I was appointed to a seat for life
In the Supreme Court of the United States."

You smiled.

HOBBLEDEHOY

HOBBLEDEHOY, neither man nor boy,
With a burden of pain and a purpose of
joy,

With a heart and a hunger of God's alloy,
He's a lad whom the jungle and heaven decoy.
There's God and the devil in Hobbledelohoy!

What shall we do when Hobbledelohoy,
With the zest of a beast to possess or destroy,
Is tripped in his track for the hunting of joy?
What shall we do when the beast in the boy
Calls out to the devil in Hobbledelohoy?

Shall we punish the nature of Hobbledelohoy,
Cage and encourage it forth to destroy?—
Or quicken the pain in him, quicken the joy,
The pang of the birth of the man from the boy!—
Shall we give him the devil?—Hobbledelohoy?

THE POET

A POET lived in Galilee,
Whose mother dearly knew him—
And his beauty like a cooling tree
Drew many people to him.

He loved the speech of simple men
And little children's laughter,
He came—they always came again.
He went—they followed after.

He had sweet-hearted things to say,
And he was solemn only
When people were unkind . . . that day
He'd stand there straight and lonely,

And tell them what they ought to do:
"Love other folk," he pleaded,
"As you love me and I love you!"
But almost no one heeded.

An Inland City

A poet died in Galilee,

They stared at him and slew him . . .

What would they do to you and me

If we could say we knew him?

THE DEATH-BED OF A CERTAIN RICH
MAN

“**W**HERE they have left me, cold upon
the bed,
I am not breathing, but I am not dead—
Blind, I see the thorns upon a head,
Motionless, I travel, inward bound,
Deaf, I hear a penetrating sound
Of voices risen from the silent ground.
His voice, the Nazarene’s, in theirs renewed,
Speaks and encircles me, a multitude,
‘We are the Christ you never understood.
We gave you all the love there is, to do
Our work with; but you hoarded it and knew
Only yourself, not us, and lived untrue
To your great privilege. Now, when you lie
So still that you can hear us—tell us why!’—
O Christ, I thought you were only one. I die.”

II. WEST

*Can prairies, towns and mountains separate
Wisdom from wisdom, answering mate from mate?*

I TURN AND FIND YOU

MILES from you I turn and find you,
My beloved. And your gaze
And the ripple of your garment
And your unexpected ways
Of approaching and of speaking
And the breath of your hair
Are as real to me as rain is
Through hot summer air.

In far companies I meet you
Moving natural and clear,
Coming toward me in your beauty . . .
O, be careful, they will hear,
They will look at us, these others,
They will listen when your hand
Touches tumult on my shoulder—
Like the surf on the sand!

*Away from
Grenstone*

KANSAS

WHEN you had come through Kansas
To your New Hampshire hills,
Their roundnesses, their cloistered roads,
Their sharpnesses, their rills,

An empty area, nothing else,
These reaches seemed to you;
But here in Kansas where you were
I am in Grenstone too,

And yet not out of Kansas
No matter where I go—
For I will add to my own land now
This easy ample flow,

Will add to my New England
This openness as clear
On earth as it is in heaven,
No hills to interfere.

Wave after wave in Kansas
A wisdom comes to me
From the levels of the world,
Consoling as the sea.

*Away from
Grenstone*

THE HILLS OF SAN JOSE

I LOOK at the long low hills of golden brown
With their little wooded canyons
And at the haze hanging its beauty in the air—
And I am caught and held, as a ball is caught
and held by a player
Who leaps for it in the field.
And as the heart in the breast of the player beats
toward the ball,
And as the heart beats in the breast of him who
shouts toward the player,
So my heart beats toward the hills that are play-
ing ball with the sun,
That leap to catch the sun from your hills
Or from you
And to throw it to other hills—
Or to me!

A BAZAAR BY THE SEA

S CENT of sunken wood and wind wet with
weeds and lifting spray,
Bitter with a wandered tear from some deep for-
gotten face
That has lain and weary turned, whiter, cleaner,
day by day
With the quiet nether waves in a wilderness of
space:
How you haunt my mouth and hold my heart and
mortify my soul
With a sense of women lying faint and lonely in
the sea,
While the waters that have wasted them, arising
from them, roll
Shadows of them on the shore and their loveliness
to me.
I have bought their broken beauty and have won-
dered all the time
Whether you I love shall ever lie releasing, with
a moan,

*Away from
Grenstone*

For strange hands to purchase and for strange lips
to rhyme,
Pearls and corals, corals, pearls, changing from
your blood and bone!

THE GOLDEN GATE

THERE comes a breath of Celia through the
sky . . .

The sun is setting pallid as a moon
Behind the airy mountains of the fog.
Clouds march in wonder through the Golden Gate.
The base of Tamalpais, reaching down,
Alters its outline to a cloud. Bright rocks,
With eddies gathered round them and with gulls
Huddled along their tops, vary and jut;
The crowds of water toppling high with foam
Crumble and fall and mingle and are gone,
And bubbly spindrift pulses on the sand.
A small wild-aster glimmers from the cliff,
Two shadowy sea-birds hasten to the sea.
And in the hush a song-sparrow begins
To sing of Celia by her inland rill,
And through the mingled blue of bay and sky
The moon is risen golden as a sun . . .
Earth and the sun and moon and you and I.

*Away from
Grenstone*

MY COUNTRY

A FLAG above me and an evening gun
Are not my country's colors and salute . . .
This is my country's reach, the sea and sky,
These are her cannon booming on the shore.

TRAIN-MATES

OUTSIDE hove Shasta, snowy height on
height,

A glory; but a negligible sight,

For you had often seen a mountain-peak

But not my paper. So we came to speak . . .

A smoke, a smile,—a good way to commence

The comfortable exchange of difference!—

You a young engineer, five feet eleven,

Forty-five chest, with football in your heaven,

Liking a road-bed newly built and clean,

Your fingers hot to cut away the green

Of brush and flowers that bring beside a track

The kind of beauty steel lines ought to lack,—

And I a poet, wistful of my betters,

Reading George Meredith's high-hearted letters,

Joining betweenwhile in the mingled speech

Of a drummer, circus-man, and parson, each

Absorbing to himself—as I to me

And you to you—a glad identity!

*Away from
Grenstone*

After a time, when the others went away,
A curious kinship made us choose to stay,
Which I could tell you now; but at the time
You thought of baseball teams and I of rhyme,
Until we found that we were college men
And smoked more easily and smiled again;
And I from Cambridge cried, the poet still:
"I know your fine Greek theatre on the hill
At Berkeley!" With your happy Grecian head
Upraised, "I never saw the place," you said—
"Once I was free of class, I always went
Out to the field."

Young engineer, you meant
As fair a tribute to the better part
As ever I did. Beauty of the heart
Is evident in temples. But it breathes
Alive where athletes quicken curly wreaths,
Which are the lovelier because they die.
You are a poet quite as much as I,
Though differences appear in what we do,
And I an athlete quite as much as you.
Because you half-surmised my quarter-mile
And I your quatrain, we could greet and smile.

Who knows but we shall look again and find
The circus-man and drummer, not behind
But leading in our visible estate—
As discus-thrower and as laureate?

SHASTA

THE canyon is deep shade beneath
And the tall pines rise out of it.
In the sun beyond, brilliant as death,
Is a mountain big with buried breath—
Hark, I can hear the shout of it!

The engine, on the curve ahead,
Turns into sight and busily
Sends up a spurt out of a bed
Of coal that lay for centuries dead
But now recovers dizzily.

What shall I be, what shall I do
In what divine experiment,
When, ready to be used anew,
I snap my nursing-bonds in two
And fling away my cerement?

Shall my good hopes continue still
And, gathering infinity,
Inhabit many a human will?—
An Indian in me, toward that hill,
Conceives himself divinity.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

POOR as I am in what men count
As fortune, lacking in the goods
And gains that make men paramount—
When I inquire of fields and woods
For happiness, they tell me true
How rich I am in only you.

Far as I am from you this day,
Impatient of the distance, fain
To lessen it and ease the way
With lesser loves—I learn through pain
The comprehension, old and new,
Of being near to only you.

Dumb as I was when I would tell
My gratitude and voice my love—
Your voice was in me like a bell
At mass when congregations prove
Their souls in silence. I could do
No better than be dumb to you.

Brief as I am in my essay
Of life and love—I importune
No more and I have put away
Impatience. I have touched my boon,
My proof, my vision through the blue—
Eternity is only you.

III. SOUTH

*Some of love's words I missed when I was near—
I must be far from them, to hear them clear.*

A TORCH

THE sun at last
Gilds me again,
And my face is no more a white stalk of celery
But a golden mango,
And the foot-tracked mud of my heart
Is sunk deep down
In the blue waters and purified
With coral . . .

Cranes carry peace to the east and the west—
Celia, Celia,
The thought of you stands clear by the mangroves,
A torch,
A flamingo!

HONEYCOMB

“I’M goin’ back a-lookin’ for the honeycomb,
Back to the jungle, ’way back home—

“The honeycomb that’s growin’ in the holes o’
trees

An’ you reach it by a-scrabblin’ up wi’ both your
knees

While you whistle ’bout yo’ baby to keep away
the bees.

“I’m goin’ where the honey crackles in the mouth,
Back to the jungle, ’way back south—

“For southern comb is sweeter’n northern chew-
in’-gum

An’ when you call the yaller-birds, they always
come,

An’ if they see the honey, they ask you for some.

“Back there in the jungle, ’way back home,
I’m goin’ to spend my old age eatin’ honey-
comb—

“Bananas an’ watermelons, pineapples an’ fruit
An’ all the birds o’ paradise a livin’ man can
shoot,
An’ I’ll eat ’em while a-leanin’ on a mangrove-
root.

“An’ when I’ve had a plenty, ’way back south,
There’s goin’ to come a angel an’ kiss me on
the mouth—

“A angel with a big wing both sides her head,
The front feathers white an’ the hind feathers
red,
It’ll be the kiss o’ heaven that’ll make me glad
I’m dead.

“An’ I won’t have to hunt no mo’ back home,
With a angel every side o’ me—bringin’ hon-
eycomb.”

A MOCKING-BIRD

AN arrow, feathery, alive,
He darts and sings—
Then with a sudden skimming dive
Of striped wings
He finds a pine and, debonair,
Makes with his mate
All birds that ever rested there
Articulate.

The whisper of a multitude
Of happy wings
Is round him, a returning brood,
Each time he sings.
Though heaven be not for them or him
Yet he is wise
And tiptoes daily on the rim
Of paradise.

GOOD-MORNING, MR. MOCKING-BIRD

GOOD-MORNING, Mr. Mocking-Bird.
“Your own good-morning, sir, to you!”
There never was, upon my word,
A single song so true—

Yet I am told you pilfer songs,
Yes, any song you chance to hear,
And never doubt if it belongs
To you, you buccaneer.

“But tell me, sir, if I am deft
At adding songs to my own store
And yet if all the songs are left
Just as they were before,

“And if I fly about and love
Beauty as any bird has lief,
The song of whip-poor-will and dove
And thrush,—am I a thief?

*Away from
Grenstone*

“Of course, dear sir, you never heard
A song, a single song, so true!”
Good-morning, Mr. Mocking-Bird.
“Good-morning, sir, to you!”

A GRENSTONE ELM

WHEN I watched an elm, a Grenstone tree,
Curtain a star to bed,
I thought of the swinging stars at sea,—
Wished I were there instead.

But now when I watch the open dome
Of the big and lonely sea,
And think of the Grenstone elm at home,
Home's the place for me!

O TAKE ME UP TO GRENSTONE

O TAKE me up to Grenstone!—
Monadnock leads the way
Where the stars are in the evening
And the birds are in the day,
Where friends are in their gardens
And little children play—
O take me up to Grenstone
And I'll never come away,
Never, never!

O take me up to Grenstone
Where the sun is in the sky
And where Celia loves to wander
Just as worshipful as I,
Where the mountain leans and comforts
When little children die—
O take me up to Grenstone!
Could I ever tell you why?—
Ever, ever?

IV. A CITY BY THE SEA

*Above the noise of countless busy men,
The voice I love whispers again—again!*

PRESENCE

W HATEVER I may see,
Of old or new
Or good or evil or unknown,
Partakes of you
To be made whole—
Can only be
Your flesh, your bone,
Celia, your soul.

TO A PAINTER

WHERE that corner-house then stood,
Where your room was, and our talks,
Laths and doors and tumbled bricks
Pile their dust upon the walks—

Thrown by no slow touch of time,
No quick blast of magic fire,
But by sure, destroying hands,
Hands of builders, building higher.

But the builders, with their derricks,
They shall never reach so high
As the blue-ascending tower
We were building in the sky.

Never seeing what we built there
Higher than in all the lands,
Yet they cannot change our corner
Where a topless tower stands.

APOLLO TROUBADOUR

WHEN a wandering Italian
Yesterday at noon
Played upon his hurdy-gurdy
Suddenly a tune,
There was magic in my ear-drums:
Like a baby's cup and spoon
Tinkling time for many sleigh-bells,
Many no-school, rainy-day-bells,
Cow-bells, frog-bells, run-away-bells,
Mingling with an ocean medley
As of elemental people
More emotional than wordy—
Mermaids laughing off their tantrums,
Mermen singing loud and sturdy,—
Silver scales and fluting shells,
Popping weeds and gurgles deadly,
Coral chime from coral steeple,
Intermittent deep-sea bells
Ringing over floating knuckles,

*Away from
Grenstone*

Buried gold and swords and buckles,
And a thousand bubbling chuckles,
Yesterday at noon,—
Such a melody as star-fish,
And all fish that really are fish.
In a gay, remote battalion
Play at midnight to the moon!

Could any playmate on our planet,
Hid in a house of earth's own granite,
Be so devoid of primal fire
That a wind from this wild crated lyre
Should find no spark and fan it?
Would any lady half in tears,
Whose fashion, on a recent day
Over the sea, had been to pay
Vociferous gondoliers,
Beg that the din be sent away
And ask a gentleman, gravely treading
As down the aisle at his own wedding,
To toss the foreigner a quarter
Bribing him to leave the street;
That motor-horns and servants' feet
Familiar might resume, and sweet

To her offended ears,
The money-music of her peers!

Apollo listened, took the quarter
With his hat off to the buyer,
Shrugged his shoulder small and sturdy,
Led away his hurdy-gurdy
Street by street, then turned at last
Toward a likelier piece of earth
Where a stream of chatter passed,
Yesterday at noon;
By a school he stopped and played
Suddenly a tune . . .
What a melody he made!
Made in all those eager faces,
Feet and hands and fingers!
How they gathered, how they stayed
With smiles and quick grimaces,
Little man and little maid!—
How they took their places,
Hopping, skipping, unafraid,
Darting, rioting about,
Squealing, laughing, shouting out!
How, beyond a single doubt,

*Away from
Grenstone*

In my own feet sprang the ardor
(Even now the motion lingers)
To be joining in their paces!
Round and round the handle went,—
Round their hearts went harder;—
Apollo urged the happy rout
And beamed, ten times as well content
With every son and daughter
As though their little hands had lent
The gentleman his quarter.
(You would not guess—nor I deny—
That that same gentleman was I!)

No gentleman may watch a god
With proper happiness therefrom;
So street by street again I trod
The way that we had come.
He had not seen me following
And yet I think he knew;
For still, the less I heard of it,
The more his music grew:
As if he made a bird of it
To sing the distance through . . .
And, O Apollo, how I thrilled,

You liquid-eyed rapsallion,
With every twig and twist of spring,
Because your music rose and filled
Each leafy vein with dew—
With melody of olden sleigh-bells,
Over-the-sea-and-far-away-bells,
And the heart of an Italian,
And the tinkling cup and spoon,—
Such a melody as star-fish,
And all fish that really are fish,
In a gay remote battalion
Play at midnight to the moon!

*Away from
Grenstone*

TO A FIELD-SPARROW

CHIRPING frequenter of meadow and tree,
Merry confrère of the mowing,
Here in New York, where awhile I must be,
I remember your coming and going.

Clearer I hear you than clocks in their towers
As, singing the city to scorn
In a flourishing business of grasses and flowers,
You scatter the minting of morn.

And so in my bath-tub I sing with a will
And I hum in the heart of the town
And try to be happy as though I could trill
With a whistle of feathery brown,

As though I could nest in a nook of the sky
Or swing there and dive in the blowing—
Accepting and singing without caring why
And letting who will do the knowing.

WHAT MAN CAN CALL ME CAPTIVE?

“**W**HAT man can call me captive?—who am
free

To cross the bridge afoot at six o'clock,
To loose myself along that human sea ;

Or else, at midnight, high above a dock
Of darkness—small, remote, unreal, beneath—
Upon my brow to bear the stars, a fresh and liv-
ing wreath.

“Is this a captive?—who at slightest cost
Sailing the harbor in the twilit air,
Sees the young Venice, whom the world had lost,
Breathlessly lift her might again, and wear
Her flowing jewels with a wiser grace
Than if she had not changed her century and
dwelling-place.

“Is this a captive?—whom the seventh day
Can lead upon the headlands and the crags,

*Away from
Grenstone*

Show him the river, open him the way
 To all the wide-flung gates and high-blown
 flags
Of liberty—and, as the sunset falls,
Stretch for his worship, overstream, beauty of
 roofs and walls.

“A thousand streets are mine. Or, if I choose,
 They all shall lead me to an outer place;
Where I shall cover miles of beach and muse
 Upon the windy world that woos my face
With buffets—crying back: ‘Am I not he
Who, having served the city, by the city is set
 free!’ ”

A SPRING-SONG IN A CAFÉ

AS gray, on the table, lay his hand
As the root of a tree in a barren land,
Or a rope that lowers the dead.

As gray as a gravestone was his head,
And as gray his beard as dusty grain;
But his eyes were as gray as the rain—

As gray as the rain that warms the snow,
The bridegroom who brings, to the grass
below,
A breath of the wedding-day.

O, his eyes were the gray of a rain in May
That shall quicken and mate a dead May-
queen,
Shall waken and marry a queen of the May
When all the graves are green!

*Away from
Grenstone*

THE HIGHEST BIDDER

TO the highest bidder,
Your birthplace, Walt Whitman,
Under the hammer . . .
The old farm on Paumanok, north of Huntington,
Its trees,
Its leaves of grass!
Voices bid and counterbid over those ninety
acres . . .
And your own voice among them, like an element,
Roaring and outbidding.

ISRAEL

THE shaken beauty of a race
Was centered in that single face,
And the ancestral woes were there
Deep in a weeping shroud of hair;
The captive glory of her head
Was Israel live, and Israel dead.

No title once the earth could tell
So proud as born in Israel.
Tonight I saw that pride of old,
In the contempt with which she sold
Cheap in a modern market-place
The attar of a bruised race.

I saw a king who kissed in awe
Those eyes, and on her cheek I saw
The singing lips of a shepherd-boy
Give kisses twelve for very joy;
But red as a sun in time of drouth,
Was Judas burning on her mouth.

*Away from
Grenstone*

Lost was her visage, like a moon,
And through her shame in misty swoon,
Moved with a less illustrious light,
But with the same immortal might,
Now drawing men to appraise a face,
That once drew God to choose a race.

ACROSS THE COUNTER

“**Y**OU call me stingy, do you, Sam?
Well, that’s the kind of girl I am.

“Look, there’s the man who owns the store,
A moral man, they say;
Packs of money—spot his pearl—
But it kind of makes me sore
What he gives us for our pay,
Working all these hours a day.

“About that supper? I don’t know.
O, well—don’t get so fierce! I’ll go.

“Ain’t there nothing more in life
But drudgery and food?
Wish to God he’d ask me out—
I’d tell him things to think about!
But no, he’s faithful to his wife.
I guess he’s never understood
That that ain’t all of being good.

I’m sorry, ma’am. What kind of fur?
I had another customer.”

HOME

“**Y**OU ask me why I give him all
My earnings and luck-money too,
And sin and suffer for his gain?
I’ll answer you.

“A lilac grew not far from home,
The way we children always went—
He beats me if I buy or borrow
Lilac scent.”

UNION SQUARE

TWO hags were huddled side by side
At dawn in Union Square,
Corrupt and silent. One had died.
The other waited there.

One of them now lay at rest
From her nocturnal beat,
Newspapers round her face and breast,
Her bonnet at her feet.

The other—sunken was her head,
Her smile was drunk and dreary—
Not even knowing what she said,
Called to me, "Hullo, dearie!"

DIANA CAPTIVE

(The Saint-Gaudens Figure)

CAPTIVE, she hunts on her tower,
Caught in her turning flight
From the covert of her bower
To the covert of the night.

Again the rising day
Renews her in the sky,
Her hand still poised the way
Her arrow used to fly.

Still the winds about her
Are winding sun and rain;
Still they will not doubt her
The mistress of the vane.

They bring to eyes of gold
The flashing of a fawn,
They sing the call of old
To feet as white as dawn.

But toward a final goal,
 With blindly turning face,
Diana, like the soul,
 Goes captive on her chase.

A NIGHT-THOUGHT

IT'S night, and I turn to the park to rest
From the motor-cars of day,
And the moon is here and manifest,
Which I thought was far away.

And how I wish this quivering bough
Were over Celia too!
But the miles are as many to Grenstone now
As moons like this are few.

O time of youth, and O, the keen
Word we never have said!—
The distance that can come between
The living and the dead!

THE PATH

I SHALL see the path to enter
From the window of the train—
Near the station, Grenstone Center,
And I'll enter it again.

Never was another village
Just that far and just that size,
In the midst of happy tillage,
In the hilly land of skies,

With each vigilant white steeple
Like a shepherd in the sun
Shepherding especial people,
Calling to them one by one—

Calling vainly to the dearest
Of the villagers, to you,
For the hymns are always clearest,
You have told me, with a view—

*Away from
Grenstone*

And on Sundays you have hid you
Where the columbine and fern
Wave you on and on, to bid you
Face the mountain at the turn . . .

How I'll hurry to be out there
When my troubles loose their hold!—
Knowing nestling all about there
Nooks of green and nooks of gold.

O, if ever was a yellow
Nest of summer in the sun
Dearly loved of any fellow—
Grenstone, Grenstone is the one!

JOURNEY

UNTIL I reach her window-sill
The whole wide world is standing still.

Some sun more lovely overhead
Is shining on my lover—
So what to me this pebbly bed
That waters wander over.
And what to me this rippling spread
Of timothy and clover?

What music has the hermit-thrush,
He might as well be still,
What color in the evening hush,
What calm upon the hill,
Until I see the climbing bush
Beside her window-sill?

O, is there any means of grace
Except in seeing Celia's face?

III. GRENSTONE AGAIN

I. CELIA

*Each of love's lovely words but makes the rest
The lovelier—till all are loveliest.*

JOURNEY'S END

OHEDGE so thick, how can I wait!—
Open, open, little gate!

And let me gain you, my delight,
White rose with thorny dart,
And hold you all the summer night
Close to my beating heart—
For there has been too much of light
Keeping us apart . . .

Hark, in the dawn, the thrush begins,
After the whip-poor-will!—
And day, awaking lovers, wins
Its way upon the hill;
And the cunning spider lurks and spins;
But we dream still . . .

That death is only a pilgrim star—
Whose journey's end is where we are.

GRENSTONE

I FACE the ancient mountain
And the little modern town,
Monadnock over Grenstone,
And my head bows down.

It's like old-fashioned praying:
To let the forehead bend
In suddenness and silence,
And to find the town a friend
And to be upheld by a mountain,
Till troubles end.

LEST I LEARN

THE tick of time is less acute
Than the most trivial word you say—
More wonderful than Eden's fruit
Your lips each moment of the day!

Lest I learn, with clearer will,
Such wonder cannot be,
Kiss me, Celia, nearer still,
And make a fool of me!

Rarer than comets waited for
Or rays of dawn in all the lands,
Move your two feet upon the floor,
Gleam the ten fingers of your hands.

Lest I learn, with clearer sight,
Such wonder cannot be,
Pull a bandage, bind it tight,
Blind me—I would not see!

BEYOND A MOUNTAIN

SOMEWHERE beyond a mountain lies
A lake the color of your eyes—
And I am mirrored like a flight
Of swallows in that evening-light.

Lovers eternal, side by side,
Closed in the elemental tide,
Nurture the root of every land—
So is my hand within your hand.

Somewhere beyond an island ships
Bear on their sails, as on your lips
You bear and tend it from the sun,
The blossom of oblivion.

Eternal lovers, in whom death
And reaching rains have mingled breath,
Are drawn by the same draught apart—
So is my heart upon your heart.

Somewhere beyond a desert rolls
An ocean that is both our souls—
Where we shall come, whatever be,
I unto you, you unto me.

THE MYSTIC

BY seven vineyards on one hill
We walked. The native wine
In clusters grew beside us two,
For your lips and for mine,

When, "Hark!" you said—"Was that a
bell

Or a bubbling spring we heard?"
But I was wise and closed my eyes
And listened to a bird.

For as summer-leaves are bent and shake
With singers passing through,
So moves in me continually
The wingèd breath of you.

You tasted from a single vine
And took from that your fill—
But I inclined to every kind,
All seven on one hill.

BREATH

WHEN so I lean my hand upon your shoulder,

When so I let my fingers fall forward
To the delicate arch of the breath,
To this most palpable cover and mold
Of the waves of life,
It is not you nor love I love—but life itself.

I look at you with a stranger, older intimacy,
I forget who you are whom I love,
With your temporal face,
I forget this or any of the generations
And its temporal face
And the lovely curious fallacy of choice . . .

Beyond the incomprehensible madness
Of the shoulder and the breast,
Above the tumult of obliteration,
I sow and reap upon the clouded tops of mountains

Grenstone Again

And am myself both sown and harvested,
And, from afar off, I behold, forget, achieve,
You and myself and all things,
When so I let my hand fall forward
To the remote circumference of breath.

II. NEWS

*If a tale of doom arrive—love, hearing it,
Can make the deathful tidings exquisite.*

PASSING NEAR

I HAD not till to-day been sure,
But now I know:

Dead men and women come and go
Under the pure
Sequestering snow.

And under the autumnal fern
And carmine bush,
Under the shadow of a thrush,
They move and learn;
And in the rush

Of all the mountain-brooks that wake
With upward fling,
To brush and break the loosening cling
Of ice, they shake
The air with spring!

I had not till to-day been sure,
But now I know:
Dead youths and maidens come and go
Beneath the lure
And undertow

Grenstone Again

Of cities, under every street
Of empty stress,
Or heart of an adulteress—
Each loud retreat
Of lovelessness.

For only by the stir we make
In passing near
Are we confused and cannot hear
The ways they take
Certain and clear.

To-day I happened in a place
Where all around
Was silence; until, underground,
I heard a pace,
A happy sound—

And people there, whom I could see,
Tenderly smiled,
While under a wood of silent wild
Antiquity
Wandered a child,

Leading his mother by the hand,
Happy and slow,
Teaching his mother where to go
Under the snow . . .
Not even now I understand.
I only know.

“THEY BROUGHT ME BITTER NEWS”

THEY told me, Jack, that you were
dead . . .

How could I answer what they said
Or stay indoors that night to look
In any face or any book!—
I fumbled at the pasture-bars,
I climbed the hill and faced the stars.

Then from the Grenstone lights that lay
As if they touched the Milky Way,
You followed me when I looked back . . .
And I laughed out loud because you, Jack,
Were death forever and for aye
And left me nothing sad to say.

THE FLING

WE pondered much, old friend, on what was
known

To us of truth;
And then we let it well alone
And went along with youth!

“Life and death shall be one to us,
We still would say,
“Though death seem different” . . . as it does
To-day.

And yet I fling reminders to the grave
Of how we laughed, we two,
As hand in hand we met the mortal wave—
That first has covered you.

TIDINGS

GONE, but beside me in the upper air;
Silent, but singing; vivid, though unseen;
You have not left me here but found me there:
That, O my friend, is what your whisperings mean.

Whisper them often, lest by learning well
The simple satisfaction of our end,
You find through this brief time, no need to tell
Eternity's good-tidings to a friend.

AN ANGEL

“**N**OTHING so falls from us as idleness
When we are dead.”
Who he was I can only guess,
But that is what he said.

GRIEVE NOT FOR BEAUTY

GRIEVE not for the invisible, transported
brow

On which like leaves the dark hair grew,
Nor for the lips of laughter that are now
Laughing inaudibly in sun and dew,
Nor for those limbs, that, fallen low
And seeming faint and slow,
Shall soon
Discover and renew
Their shape and hue—
Like birches varying white before the moon
Or a wild cherry-bough
In spring or the round sea—
And shall pursue
More ways of swiftness than the swallow dips
Among, and find more winds than ever blew
To haven the straining sails of unimpeded ships.

THREE POPLARS

THREE poplars paused beside a brook
Before the autumnal mountain,
Then bowed to me, and undertook
The dance of death and shone and shook
Like waters in a fountain.

O, high the happy bosom heaves
When love is in the dancer!
But life falls quiet as the leaves,
And soon the dance of death bereaves
A lover of his answer.

Lightly a girl had danced away
Her breath and all her laughter;
A boy went joining her one day;
And a little fellow, at his play,
Saw them and followed after . . .

And now three poplars poised and shook
Like waters in a fountain
And, iridescent, undertook
The dance of death beside a brook
Between me and the mountain.

III. HAND IN HAND

*A lover, with new eyes, can turn and see
All men companions in his destiny.*

THE CALENDAR

CELIA, my calendar, declaring clear
That gladness is in season all the year,

You tell for me the springtime;

When through sweetened air

We follow over Grenstone hills—

And find youth everywhere.

You tell for me the summer,

The blueness of sky,

The refuge, the open bower

Above adversity.

And when you count the autumn,

Soft in your lips I hear,

And in the whisper of the hills,

A little unborn year . . .

And when you count the winter,

The drift, the fold,

We find old age a hidden hearth—

Though the winds blow cold.

So you recount our footsteps on a star

Outshining death, Celia, my calendar!

LITTLE PAN

OUT on the hill—by an autumn-tree
As red as his cheek in the weather—
He waved a sumac-torch of glee
And preened, like a scarlet feather,
A branch of maple bright on his breast
And shook an oak in his cap;
And the dance of his heels on the rocky crest
Was a woodpecker's tap-tap-tap.
The eyes of a squirrel were quick in his head
And the grace of a deer in his shoulder,
And never a cardinal beckoned so red
As his torch when he leapt on a boulder;
A robin exclaiming he mocked in a voice
Which hurried the heavens around him.
What could we do but attend and rejoice,
Celia and I who had found him!
He spied us at last, though we hid by a pine;
And before he might vanish in smoke
I tried to induce him to give us a sign,
But he stopped in his dance when I spoke—

“O tell me your name and the hill you inhabit!”

He curled round his tree like a cat;

“They call me,” he cried, as he fled like a rabbit,

“Donovan’s damned little brat!”

GOD'S ACRE

BECAUSE we felt there could not be
A mowing in reality
So white and feathery-blown and gay
With blossoms of wild caraway,
I said to Celia, "Let us trace
The secret of this pleasant place!"
We knew some deeper beauty lay
Below the bloom of caraway,
And when we bent the white aside
We came to paupers who had died:
Rough wooden shingles row on row,
And God's name written there—*John Doe*.

TO ANYONE

WHETHER the time be slow or fast,
 Enemies, hand in hand,
Must come together at the last
 And understand.

No matter how the die is cast
 Nor who may seem to win,
You know that you must love at last—
 Why not begin?

WAR

FOOLS, fools, fools,
Your blood is hot to-day.
It cools
When you are clay,
It joins the very clod
Wherein at last you see
The living God,
The loving God,
Which was your enemy.

THE FAITH

WHETHER she guide me through my days,
Or lead me to the night,
My step shall be a song of praise,
An echo of her own delight;
For now assuredly I know,
(Her mere existence proves it so)
Though less than ever understood,
Because of Celia, God is good.
There is more learning in her lips
Than in great companies,—
No tower between the stars' eclipse
Gathers remoter rarities
Than those that on her brow are rare
As blossoms in a moonlit air,
Than those that sparkle on her brow
Like moonlight on an apple-bough.
If wise men speak a final word
Her silence is a better,
Yet many a little chirping bird
Is much my Celia's debtor;

Grenstone Again

Whether she speak or hold her tongue,
It seems alike a hymn is sung—
As though her pause and her remark
Circled in worship, like a lark.

If truth be not the truth she knows,
Let me not find it out—
She is my faith and my repose,
My spirit's forward battle-shout,
It matters not what things may be,
All things are authorized for me:
The simple motion of her nod
Cannot be anything but God.

IV. WOMEN

*And women are his awe: so that he pays
New homage and new service all his days.*

IN THE COOL OF THE EVENING

SHE

BUT tell me, Adam—while I watch your face
Turn to the moon and me—when have
we seen

The God who made us and who made this
place?—

We say we love Him . . . Tell me what we
mean!

HE

I have not seen Him. But the thunder-clap
Is His right hand, I think, holding the sword
Of lightning—and when trees are running sap,
My veins are running fire before the Lord.

SHE

Can that be love?—which never sees nor knows,
But thinks it counts the deadly thunder dear,
Which feels vague passion when the spring-sap
flows—

But cannot tell its rapture from its fear?

Grenstone Again

HE

I fear Him less than if He answered you
With lightning . . . If He gave to me great store
Of fruits, for loving Him, and you but few,
For doubting Him, then I should love Him more.

SHE

The fruits are for us both. And as they spring
From one another, so creation grows
And teaches us that every living thing
Adam may know as the creator knows.

HE

Sharp in the tree the lightning stood, to shame
And punish us! . . . This is His garden, Eve,
Which He prepared for us before we came,
And we are nourished only by His leave!

SHE

Then let us go outside!—let us rejoice
To find with our own hands new bread and wine
And certain love each in the other's voice! . . .
. . . How I have quieted your mouth with mine!

HE

But how shall we succeed, beginning late?
Water and meat are here and grapes and corn
And there is nothing further to create.
The world is made and you and I are born.

SHE

He is but one—and, Adam, we are two!
Let us remake the world and take the rod!
So let our fire, filling my life with you
And yours with me, create a greater God!

RESPONSES

“**W**HAT can a woman find in us,
What has her wit divined in us? . . .
The utmost and the least in us—
The angel and the beast in us.”

“What can a man descry in us
And so allow the lie in us? . . .
The serpent and the dove in us—
And O, the mother-love in us.”

ANNUNCIATION

(Sung by the Voices of the Unborn)

I

O WOMEN, wonder-bringers, wakeners of
earth,

We who are about to live salute you!

Angelic presences foretell our birth

To you, shaking your hearts with awe,

Transfiguring your faces with the pity

Which is God, thrilling your hands to write the
law

On many a mountain and to bring it thence

To many a waiting city,

Till there shall be no other punishments

But love, no lovelier potencies than human
birth.

The old who are about to die dispute you.

But we who are about to live salute you,

O women, wonder-bringers, wakers of earth!

Think not of pain in store for us nor of our death,
But only of our life. Give us your breath
With all its hope unbroken.
Believe in us, that in our later time
We may believe in you.
Plant—in the mud about you and the grime—
Seeds of the sublime,
And if your faith is more than dreamed and
spoken,
As you have done so shall we dare to do.
Out of your faith make deeds, O, make the world
with it, and thus,
An image and a token
Of your faith—make us!

To our own mothers are we born,
Also to many mothers: yea,
To you who build beyond your walls and doors
A cradle of the world,
A home, a park, a confidence, a joy;
You who have patiently unfurled
The gleaming flags of peace;

And you, beloved, with no girl or boy
Singled from all of us; and you whose loves wandered away,
Whom you shall rather glorify than mourn . . .
Now generations shall be born of us and none
dispute you,
O women, wonder-bringers, wakeners of earth!
Destiny pours
Its fullness through you in our birth
And shall not cease.
For we who are about to live salute you—
We are yours!

V. LOSING CELIA

*How could I know that darkness would close in
On everything that shall be or has been!*

THE NIGHT

I HAVE so loved life that when night is deep
I shall but fall asleep
As a lover's eyes grow dim
With his beloved lying close to him.

I HEARD HER SING

SHE sang of life, mating an ancient word
With modern music in her own wise way.
Her voice was like a little breeze that stirred
The snows of yesterday.

Ladies and lovers, each forgotten ghost . . .
Her voice, with names remembered from the
dead,
Singing their epitaph, and Helen's most,
Was like a heart that bled.

In her the poet sang again his dream
Of what had been and nevermore should
be . . .
And out of far away her voice would seem
Like sails upon the sea.

And while she finished with their dreams and
loves,
And the wind disposed of fortune and of
fame,
Her voice was Venus, led by little doves,
Breathing a holy name.

Losing Celia

Helen and Phryne and Semiramis,
Renewed and glorious in her, were here . . .
And yet her voice, when she had proven this,
Was like a fallen tear.

SURETY

CELIA, we have each other's love,
A love that flies on wings of light
From star to star and sings above
The night:
We bid each other's eyes reveal
The God whose images we are;
We find each other's hand upon the wheel
Piloting every star . . .

Should I then face with a less lonely breath
Your gradual, sudden, everlasting death? . . .

O, lest a separating wind assail
The jocund stars and all their ways be dearth,
And love, undone of its immense avail,
Go homeless even on earth,
Let us be constant, though we travel far,
With the little earthly tokens of our trust.
And not forget, piloting any star,
How dear a thing is dust!

FAREWELL

FAREWELL should be an easy word to
say . . .

It seemed to be for Celia yesterday.

Although we guessed how soon she was to die,
Celia was laughing when we said good-by.

AT THE LAST

THERE is no denying
That it matters little,
When through a narrow door
We enter a room together,
Which goes after, which before.

Perhaps you are not dying:
Perhaps—there is no knowing—
I shall slip by and turn and laugh with you
Because it mattered so little,
The order of our going.

HIC JACET

SHE who could not bear dispute
Nor unquiet, now is mute;
She who could not leave unsaid
Perfect silence, now is dead.

DISTANCE

ONE day I walked alone from our dear place
For miles. And by the corner of a hill
I saw the chimney and your window-sill
And all the steps that it would take to fill
The wide and wooded intervening space.
But I consoled my spirit: Peace, be still!—
And soon went home again—and saw your face.

One night we walked those miles, before you
died . . .

How it comes back . . . and how I touch your
hair—

Yet you seem farther away, in the night air,
Than home, our happy place . . . aware
Of you, I am without you, you abide
In mystic distance that I cannot fare—
For all we cling so closely side by side.

THERE IS NOT ANYTHING

THERE is not anything
I would not do,
Just to be journeying
Again with you.

There is not anything
I would not be,
To have you journeying
Again with me.

But nothing I can do
Or be will bring
A word or sign from you,
Not anything.

IT IS NOT SHE!

I THINK she enters at the door,
I hold my breath to hear . . .
Learn, foolish ears, that nevermore
Can Celia come so near.

And now she passes in the street—
I start around to see . . .
But O, you quick impulsive feet,
Turn back!—it is not she.

ALOOF

BROOK, how aloof your heart has grown
That closely beat with her and me!—
Am I the only one
Remembering, of us three?

Stars now cold as stone,
Once warm as she,
What have you done
To me?

TRYST IN GRENSTONE

HERE, where many a time we met
With many a mortal vow
Never either to forget,
Celia, though the leaves are wet,
Is waiting for me now.

None for company has she
But Grenstone trees around,
Where she waits and waits for me,
While I come and cannot be
The few feet underground.

SENTENCE

SHALL I say that what heaven gave
Earth has taken?—
Or that sleepers in the grave
Reawaken?

One sole sentence can I know,
Can I say:
You, my comrade, had to go,
I to stay.

VI. FINDING CELIA

*There is no death for lovers—if there shine
Such light through others' darkness as through mine.*

THE WIND AT THE DOOR

THE wind is rattling at the door
With all his vim.

"Dance with me down the shore," he says.
But I will not dance with him.

I will wait with you in your place of death,
Although I know
How alive the wind would greet my face
If I should go.

I will stay with you where the light is half,
As by a pool at evening in a wood . . .
Or, Celia, shall we laugh again?
Can tears do good?

Shall you not come and share with me anew
All that we had and more—
And let the wind touch my face too?—See!
. . . I open the door. . . .

Dancing again with the wind, with you,
Dancing down the shore!

THE WAY OF BEAUTY

BEAUTY came Celia's way to be
More beautiful by far,
As night advancing on the sea,
Is lighted by a star.

Then Celia followed beauty's way
More beautiful to be,
As when the star, before the day,
Is taken by the sea.

A MASQUE OF LIFE AND DEATH

A HOODED figure followed me,
Striking a terror in my breast;
Headlong I fled from him—
No good was in his quest.

A golden figure ran from me
On naked feet that left no trace;
Headlong I followed her
But could not see her face—

Until she turned and, while I stared
As at the coming of great ships,
The hooded figure seized his time
And kissed me with her lips.

DURING A CHORALE BY CÉSAR FRANCK

IN an old chamber softly lit
We heard the Chorale played.
And where you sat, an exquisite
Image of life and lover of it,
Death came to serenade.

I know now, Celia, what you heard
And why you turned and smiled.
It was the white wings of a bird
Offering flight—and you were stirred
Like an adventurous child.

Death sang: "There is no cause for fear,
Uplift your countenance!"
And bade me be your cavalier,
Called me to march and shed no tear,
Said, "Sing to her and dance!"

And so you followed, lured and led
By those mysterious wings.
And when I knew that you were dead,
I wept . . . But now I sing instead,
As a true lover sings.

I sing of you—"O, take her deep,
And cherish and proclaim
A more restoring calm than sleep,
And bring the charge to all who weep
To glorify her name!"

And when I sing of you, you hear
My heart, my praise, my prayer,
Which formerly were never clear
As now they are, for you are near
Forever everywhere.

SONGS ASCENDING

LOVE has been sung a thousand ways—
So let it be . . .

The songs, ascending in your praise
Through all my days,
Are three.

Your cloud-white body first I sing:
Your love was heaven's blue
And I, a bird, flew caroling
In ring on ring
Of you.

Your nearness is the second song:
When God began to be
And bound you strongly, right or wrong,
With his own thong,
To me.

But O, the song, eternal, high,
That tops these two!—
You live forever, you who die,
I am not I
But you.

A PRAYER

I SAID a prayer to God
 When I had need,
And I saw His great head nod,
 Hearing me plead.

I thought He answered me,
 I knelt and wept . . .
God did not even see,
 He only slept.

But I no longer care
 Whether He saw—
I have answered my own prayer
 With God's own awe.

Finding that I may be
 Mighty and nod
At my own destiny,
 I sleep like God.

VII. AN END AND A BEGINNING

*Creator and created, God shall be
Born forevermore—of her and me.*

HOW CAN I KNOW YOU ALL?

HOW can I know you all, you who are passing?

You in the crowds, moving so many ways.

You hundreds and you tens, even you twos and
threes,

How can I hope to know you?

On your faces I have looked and I have seen each
time

Tokens of kinship,

Patents like mine of joy

And signs like mine of proud and piteous need,
Of pain, of knowledge and of reparation.

I have heard hidden in your voices every synonym
of love.

But O you many faces known to me far-off

And strange to me when you are near,

How shall I know you whom I need to know,

Discovering your splendid lonely souls

And mating them with mine?—

Grenstone Again

Out from among you comes a voice in answer:

“How can you know

Him whom you will not know?

We are yourself.”

FOR I AM NOTHING IF I AM NOT ALL

I GO elate along the street and care
For you, for you, for every one I meet,
Not only for the favored and the fair
 Along the street
But every soul . . . you for your lips, and
 you
For the serene compassion of your brow
Curved like a hillside looking on a view,
 You for a glow
Within your eyes of sunset after rain,
You for inheritance withheld, foregone,
For passion, melancholy, vigil, pain:
 O everyone!

For I am nothing if I am not all,
For I am he who loves and cannot cease
Till every separating barrier fall
 And there is peace.

Grenstone Again

Spring urges me to comprehend the crowd.
And I would take them in my arms and hold
Their sweetness close to me. My head is
bowed,

Lest I be bold

And claim the nearest-comer, and my sight
Is blinded with the touch of destiny.

For, Celia, people, people, by your light
Are parts of me—

And that is why I quiver now to greet
Them passing, though they know not we are
one,

And that is why this bright confusing street
Shines in the sun.

OPEN HOUSE

I HAD built my being stone by stone,
With windows and with doors . . .
And there came a jealous company
By twos and tens and scores,
Seeming to claim my house from me,
And traversed all the floors,
As a house they had a right to own,
Its true proprietors.

And so I heard an angry tone,
Another answering hoarse:
“It is not yours,” said one to me
And one to him, “Nor yours!”
Then each to each (to me now none)
Cried out, in scattered scores,
That ill-acquainted company,
“Nor yours!” “Nor yours!” “Nor
yours!”

Grenstone Again

I took my being stone by stone,
 Its windows and its doors,
Took it apart impartially,
 Roofs and walls and floors,
And then when every claim was gone
 Of the jealous visitors,
I joined my being wide and free:
 Their house and mine—and yours!

CONSUMMATION

THERE was a strangeness on her lips,
Lips that had been so sure;
She still was mine but in eclipse,
Beside me but obscure.

There was a cloud upon her heart;
For, where my Celia lay,
Death, come to break her life apart,
Had led her love away.

Through the cold distance of her eyes
She could no longer see.
But when she died, she heard me rise
And followed quietly—

And close beside me, looking down
As I did on the dead,
She made of time a wedding-gown,
Of space a marriage-bed.

Grenstone Again

I took, in her, death for a wife,
 She married death in me . . .
And now there is no other life,
 No other God than we!

BEHOLD THE MAN

BEHOLD the man alive in me,
Behold the man in you!
If there is God—am I not he?—
Shall I myself undo?

I have been waiting long enough . . .
Impossible gods, good-by!
I wait no more . . . The way is rough—
But the god who climbs is I.

DATE DUE
Date I checked

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